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SHORT STORY COLLECTION

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THE BEQUEST OF
WINWARD PRESCOTT
CLASS OF 1909

Tales from McClure's

"WHY NOT?"

Tales from McClure's

ROMANCE

THE TYPE-WRITTEN LETTER
By Robert Barr

RACHEL
By E. V. Wilson

A GAME POSTPONED
By Gertrude Smith

WHEN SHE WAS THIRTY
By Louise Chandler Moulton

NEIGHBOR KING
By Collins Shackelford

A FELINE FATE
By Anna Robeson Brown

THE WHIP-HAND
By Ann Devoore

NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY & McCLURE CO.
1897

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THE TYPE-WRITTEN LETTER

BY

ROBERT BARR

THE TYPE-WRITTEN LETTER

WHEN a man has battled with poverty all his life, fearing it as he fought it, feeling for its skinny throat to throttle it, and yet dreading all the while the coming of the time when it would gain the mastery and throttle him—when such a man is told that he is rich, it might be imagined he would receive the announcement with hilarity. When Richard Denham realized that he was wealthy he became even more sober than usual, and drew a long breath as if he had been running a race and had won it. The man who brought him the news had

no idea he had told Denham anyt[illegible]
He merely happened to say, "You [illegible]
man, Mr. Denham, and will never [illegible]

Denham had never before bee[illegible]
rich man, and up to that moment ha[illegible]
thought of himself as wealthy. A[illegible]
out the check asked of him, and h[illegible]
departed gratefully, leaving the m[illegible]
with something to ponder over. He was as
surprised with the suddenness of the thing
as if some one had left him a legacy. Yet
the money was all of his own accumulating;
but his struggle had been so long, and he had
been so hopeless about it, that from mere
habit he exerted all his energies long after
the enemy was overcome—just as the troops
at New Orleans fought a fierce battle, not
knowing the war was over. He had sprung
from such a hopelessly poor family. Poverty
had been their inheritance from generation
to generation. It was the invariable legacy
that father had left to son in the Denham
family. All had accepted their lot with un-
complaining resignation, until Richard re-
solved he would at least have a fight for it.

HE DREW THE CHECK.

And now the fight had been won. Denham sat in his office staring at the dingy wall-paper so long that Rogers, the chief clerk, put his head in and said in a deferential voice:

"Anything more to-night, Mr. Denham?"

Denham started as if that question, in that tone, had not been asked him every night for years.

"What 's that? what 's that?" he cried.

Rogers was astonished, but too well trained to show it.

"Anything more to-night, Mr. Denham?"

"Ah, quite so. No, Rogers, thank you; nothing more."

"Good night, Mr. Denham."

"Eh? Oh, yes; good night, Rogers, good night."

When Mr. Denham left his office and went out into the street, everything had an unusual appearance to him. He walked long, unheeding the direction. He looked at the fine residences, and realized that he might have a fine residence if he wanted it. He saw handsome carriages; he, too, might set

up an equipage. The satisfaction these thoughts produced was brief. Of what use would a fine house or an elegant carriage be to him? He knew no one to invite to the house or to ride with him in the carriage. He began to realize how utterly alone in the world he was. He had no friends—no acquaintances, even. The running dog with its nose to the ground sees nothing of the surrounding scenery. He knew men in a business way, of course, and doubtless each of them had a home in the suburbs somewhere; but he could not take a business man by the shoulders and say to him, "Invite me to your house. I am lonely; I want to know people."

If he got such an invitation he would not know what to do with himself. He was familiar with the counting-room and its language, but the drawing-room was an unexplored country to him, where an unknown tongue was spoken. On the road to wealth he had missed something, and it was now too late to go back for it. Only the day before he had heard one of the clerks, who did not

know he was within ear-shot, allude to him as "the old man." He felt as young as ever he did, but the phrase, so lightly spoken, made him catch his breath.

As he was now walking through the park and away from the busy street, he took off his hat and ran his fingers through his grizzled hair, looking at his hand when he had done so as if the gray, like wet paint, had come off. He thought of a girl he knew once, who perhaps would have married him if he had asked her, as he was tempted to do. But that had always been the mistake of the Denhams. They had all married young, except himself, and so sunk deeper into the mire of poverty, pressed down by a rapidly increasing progeny. The girl had married a baker, he remembered. Yes, that was a long time ago. The clerk was not far wrong when he called him an old man. Suddenly another girl arose before his mental vision—a modern girl, very different indeed to the one who married the baker. She was the only woman in the world with whom he was on speaking terms, and he knew her

merely because her light and nimble fin
played the business sonata of one note on
office type-writer. Miss Gale was pretty,
course,—all type-writer girls are,—and
was generally understood in the office that
she belonged to a good family who had come-
down in the world. Her somewhat independent
air deepened this conviction and kept
the clerks at a distance. She was a sensible
girl, who realized that the type-writer paid
better than the piano, and accordingly turned
the expertness of her white fingers to the
former instrument. Richard Denham sat
down upon a park bench. "Why not?" he
asked himself. There was no reason against
it, except that he felt he had not the cou-
rage. Nevertheless he formed a desperate
resolution.

Next day business went on as usual.
Letters were answered, and the time arrived
when Miss Gale came in to see if he had any
further commands that day. Denham hesi-
tated. He felt vaguely that a business office
was not the proper place for a proposal, yet
he knew he would be at a disadvantage any-

where else. In the first place, he had no plausible excuse for calling upon the young woman at home; and in the second place, he knew, if he once got there, he would be stricken dumb. It must either be at his office or nowhere.

"Sit down a moment, Miss Gale," he said at last. "I wanted to consult you about a matter—about a business matter."

Miss Gale seated herself, and automatically placed on her knee the shorthand writing-pad, ready to take down his instructions. She looked up at him expectantly. Denham, in an embarrassed manner, ran his fingers through his hair.

"I am thinking," he began, "of taking a partner. The business is very prosperous now; in fact, it has been so for some time."

"Yes?" said Miss Gale, interrogatively.

"Yes. I think I should have a partner. It is about that I wanted to speak to you."

"Don't you think it would be better to consult with Mr. Rogers? He knows more about business than I. But perhaps it is Mr. Rogers who is to be the partner?"

"No, it is not Rogers. ;
man. But—it is not Roger

"Then I think in an impo
this Mr. Rogers, or some on
business as thoroughly as h
able to give you advice that
value."

"I don't want advice e
made up my mind to have a
partner is willing."

Denham mopped his brov
to be even more difficult t
ticipated.

"Is it, then, a question o
partner is to bring in?" a
anxious to help him.

"No, no. I don't wish
have enough for both. An
very prosperous, Miss Gale
been."

The young woman raised
surprise.

"You surely don't intend t
its with a partner who bring
the business?"

"Yes—yes, I do. You see, as I said, I have no need for more capital."

"Oh, if that is the case, I think you should consult Mr. Rogers before you commit yourself."

"But Rogers would n't understand either."

"I 'm afraid I don't understand—that It seems to me a foolish thing to do is, if you want my advice."

"Oh, yes, I want it. But it is n't as foolish as you think. I should have had a partner long ago. That is where I made the mistake. I've made up my mind on that."

"Then I don't see that I can be of any use —if your mind is already made up."

"Oh, yes, you can. I 'm a little afraid that my offer may not be accepted."

"It is sure to be, if the man has any sense. No fear of such an offer being refused. Offers like that are not to be had every day. It will be accepted."

"Do you really think so, Miss Gale? I am glad that is your opinion. Now, what I wanted to consult you about is the form of the offer— I would like to put it well-del

icately, you know, so that it woul
refused, nor give offense."

"I see. You want me to write a
him?"

"Exactly, exactly," cried Den
some relief. He had not thought
a letter before. Now he wonde
had not thought of it. It wa
the best way out of a situatio
tremely disconcerting.

"Have you spoken to hi

"To him? What him

"To your future par
posal?"

"No, no. Oh, no. T
to nobody but you."

"And you are determ
Mr. Rogers before you

"Certainly not. It
business."

"Oh, very well," said
bending over her writin

It was evident that
ham's wisdom was stead
denly she looked up.

"How much shall I say the annual profits are? Or do you want that mentioned?"

"I—I don't think I would mention that. You see, I don't wish this arrangement to be carried out on a monetary basis—not altogether."

"On what basis, then?"

"Well—I can hardly say. On a personal basis, perhaps. I rather hope that the person—that my partner—would, you know, like to be associated with me."

"On a friendly basis, do you mean?" asked Miss Gale, mercilessly.

"Certainly. Friendly, of course—and perhaps more than that."

Miss Gale looked up at him with a certain hopelessness of expression.

"Why not write a note inviting your future partner to call upon you here, or anywhere else that would be convenient, and then discuss the matter?"

Denham looked frightened.

"I thought of that, but it would n't do. No; it would n't do. I would much rather settle everything by correspondence."

"I am afraid I shall not be able to pose a letter that will suit you. There to be so many difficulties. It is very usual."

"That is true, and that is why I knew one but you could help me, Miss Gale. pleases you it will please me."

Miss Gale shook her head, but after a f moments she said, "How will this do?

"'DEAR SIR—,'"

"Wait a moment," cried Mr. Denham; "th seems rather a formal opening, does n't i How would it read if you put it 'Dea Friend'?"

"If you wish it so." She crossed out th "Sir" and substituted the word suggested Then she read the letter:

"'DEAR FRIEND: I have for some time past been desirous of taking a partner, and would be glad if you would consider the question and consent to join me in this business. The business is, and has been for several years, very prosperous, and as I shall require

no capital from you, I think you will find my offer a very advantageous one. I will— '"

"I—I don't think I would put it quite that way," said Denham, with some hesitation. "It reads as if I were offering everything, and that my partner—well, you see what I mean."

"It's the truth," said Miss Gale, defiantly.

"Better put it on the friendly basis, as you suggested a moment ago."

"I didn't suggest anything, Mr. Denham. Perhaps it would be better if you would dictate the letter exactly as you want it. I knew I could not write one that would please you."

"It does please me, but I'm thinking of my future partner. You are doing first-rate—better than I could do; but just put it on the friendly basis."

A moment later she read:

"'. . . join me in this business. I make you this offer entirely from a friendly, and not from a financial, standpoint, hoping that

you like me well enough
with me.'

"Anything else, Mr. De
"No; I think that covers
It will look rather short, ty
it? Perhaps you might a
show that I shall be exceedi
if my offer is not accepted.
"No fear," said Miss
that, though. 'Yours trul
truly'?"
"You might end it 'You
The rapid click of the
heard for a few moments i
and then Miss Gale came o
pleted letter in her hand.
"Shall I have the bo
asked.
"Oh, bless you, no!" ar
ham, with evident trepidat
The young woman said
does n't want Mr. Rogers
wonder; it is a most un
posal."

Then she said aloud, "Shall you want me again to-day?"

"No, Miss Gale; and thank you very much."

Next morning Miss Gale came into Mr. Denham's office with a smile on her face.

"You made a funny mistake last night, Mr. Denham," she said as she took off her wraps.

"Did I?" he asked in alarm.

"Yes. You sent that letter to my address. I got it this morning. I opened it, for I thought it was for me, and that perhaps you

did not need me to-day. But l
that you put it in the wrong e

yo
to-
l
ton
"I
ever
he n
out
for t
and l
it as il
not
for its
gone a
The r
Miss Ga
late, ar
looked
ened.
evident
Denham
losing his mind. She put the letter before him and said:

"You addressed the [illegible] that to me the second time, Mr. Denham."

There was a look of haggard anxiety about Denham that gave color to her suspicions. He felt that it was now or never.

"Then why don't you answer it, Miss Gale?" he said gruffly.

She backed away from him.

"Answer it?" she repeated faintly.

"Certainly. If I got a letter twice I would answer it."

"What do you mean?" she cried, with her hand on the door-knob.

"Exactly what the letter says. I want you for my partner. I want to marry you, and—financial considerations—"

"Oh!" cried Miss Gale, in a long-drawn, quivering sigh. She was doubtless shocked at the word he had used, and fled to her type-writing room, closing the door behind her.

Richard Denham paced up and down the floor for a few moments, then rapped lightly at her door; but there was no response. He put on his hat and went out into the street.

THE TYPE-WRITTEN

After a long and aimless walk
self again at his place of busi
he went in Rogers said to him:
"Miss Gale has left, sir."
"Has she?"
"Yes; and she has given notic
she is not coming back, sir."
"Very well."
He went into his own room, and fo
letter marked "Personal" on his desk.
tore it open, and read in neatly type-wr
characters:

"I have resigned my place as type-wr
girl, having been offered a better situat
I am offered a partnership in the house
Richard Denham. I have decided to acc
the position, not so much on account of
financial attractions as because I shall
glad, on a friendly basis, to be associa
with the gentleman I have named.
did you put me to all that worry wri
that idiotic letter, when a few words w
have saved ever so much bother? You
dently *need* a partner. My mother will

pleased to meet you any time you call. You have the address.

"Your friend,
"MARGARET GALE."

"Rogers!" shouted Denham, joyfully.

"Yes, sir," answered that estimable man, putting his head into the room.

"Advertise for another type-writer girl, Rogers."

"Yes, sir," said Rogers.

RACHEL

BY

MRS. E. V. WILSON

RACHEL

IT was the middle of a short D
afternoon. From the scholars
little log school-house in the Still
trict rose a buzzing sound as they l
their desks, intent on books or mis
the case might be. The teacher, a g
ing young man of twenty or thereab
busy with a class in arithmetic whe
voice called out:

"Teacher, Rachel Stillman 's
story-book."

"Bring the book to me," said the
quietly; and the delinquent, a girl
fourteen, slowly rose, and walkin
placed a much-worn volume in his

"Why," he said, glancing at the open page, "it is the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' No wonder you are interested. But you must not read it during school hours."

The child lifted to his face a pair of large blue eyes, beautiful with timid wistfulness, as she replied:

"I know I ought n't, sir, but I wanted to see how they got out of Doubting Castle so bad."

He smiled. "I will give you the book after school; then you can read it at home."

"Oh, no," she whispered; "father won't let me read story-books."

"He surely would not object to this," answered the young teacher; "but I will keep it until recess to-morrow, and, never fear, Christian and Hopeful will outwit the giant yet."

The wistful eyes brightened, and with a grateful smile Rachel returned to her desk.

"First class in spelling, take your places," called the teacher.

Rachel belonged to this class, as did all the larger scholars, among whom was her

brother Thomas, two years her elder. teacher had promised a prize at the end of the term to the member of the class obtaining the greatest number of head marks. consequently a good deal of interest taken in the lessons.

Rachel had been at the head of the class the evening before; therefore she now occupied her station at its foot. Tom, her brother, now was head, and for some time no change in position was made. But finally "somebody blundered," and Rachel, who was one of good spellers, went up in the long line. Presently another word was missed, and Rachel walked to the head. Tom passed her spitefully.

"Another mark, Rachel," said the teacher, "for that is the end of the lesson."

The class resumed their seats, and, a minutes after, school was dismissed for day.

"Good evening," said the teacher, Rachel and a younger sister, a pretty, delicate child, passed him at the door. "No worrying about Christian, Rachel."

"I won't," she laughed. "I guess he 'll get out. Didn't he stand up to old Hollyon?"

"Like a good fellow," was the reply. "Hope I 'll come off as well."

She looked at him inquiringly; but he had turned toward his desk, and the subject was set out on their half-mile walk home.

Let us precede them and see what manner of home it is to which these children [illegible].

The farm is a large one, the buildings substantial, and everything has a prosperous well-to-do look. Mr. Stillman, the owner of these broad acres and the father of three, Tom, Rachel, and Susy, as well as of three more girls and another stalwart son, is a stout, comfortable-looking man of forty-five or fifty. A glance at his close, thin lips and keen gray eyes would convince an observant person that he would make it very uncomfortable for any one in his power who might differ from him in opinion or dispute his authority. Just now he is chatting pleasantly with his hired man, and pays no attention to the children, who pass him on the way to the house.

Indoors, Mrs. Stillman, a slender, haired woman, who looks as if she felt owed the world an apology for living in preparing supper, assisted by her two da ters, Elizabeth, a sad-faced woman of twe four, and Margaret, a girl of eighteen, her father's determined mouth and chin her mother's large blue eyes and fair The clock struck five as the school-girl tered the kitchen, a large room whic winter did duty as dining-room as we cooking-room.

"Run in the sitting-room, girls, and warm," said the mother. "Supper is al ready."

"Oh, we're not cold; are we, Susy? another head mark, mother," said Rach

The mother smiled. "I hope you or will get the prize. Where is he?" She interrupted by a stamping of feet as the was thrown open, and Mr. Stillman, foll by the hired man and Tom, entered room.

"Supper is ready," said Mrs. Still "We were just going to call you."

"Well, I guess it will keep till we're ready," answered her husband, roughly. "Rachel, get some water; the bucket's empty, of course. Margaret, where's the wash-basin? Nothing in its place, as usual. Pity there was n't two or three more girls lazyin' around!"

Nobody replied to this tirade. The hired man picked up the basin, Margaret handed a towel, Rachel brought the water, and soon the family were gathered around the well-spread table.

"I tell you," said Mr. Stillman, after a few mouthfuls of the savory food had apparently put him in a better humor, "I think we'll have fine weather for hog-killin' next week, and I never did have a finer lot of hogs."

"Oh, father," said Margaret, "don't butcher next week. Friday is Christmas day and—"

"Christmas!" interrupted her father. "Well, we always butcher Christmas week, don't we?"

"Yes, I know," she said, her lips trembling in spite of her effort to control herself.

"But we never have enjoyed the h
and I thought maybe this year you —
"We will do this year as we alway
broke in the father, angrily. "I s
—with a look at his wife, from w
shrank as from a blow—"this is on
plans to have your girls gadding
country."

"Mother never said anythin
said Margaret, her temper get
of her; "but nobody else t
times to do their hardest a
"Will you hush?" thu
"What do I care what
I am master here."

No one spoke again.
not be denied. He was
wife and daughters kne

Poor Mrs. Stillman!
girls had died a few we
and the tears that fell
were not half so bitter
when first she held their
her heart. When on this
had shown his authority, the

ters rose from the table, and taking a couple of large buckets, went quietly out to the barn-yard, and proceeded to milk the half-dozen cows awaiting them.

It was nearly dark and very cold; but no word was spoken, except to the animals, as the girls hurried through the work, and hastened back to the kitchen, where Rachel and the mother were clearing away the supper-table and making the needful preparations for the early breakfast.

When all was finished, the mother and daughters entered the large room adjoining the kitchen, which served as sitting-room for the family and bedroom for the parents, Mr. Stillman not permitting a fire kept in any other room in the house. Mrs. Stillman sat down with her knitting-work as close in the corner as possible. Elizabeth brought in a large basket of rags, and she and Margaret were soon busy sewing strips and winding balls for a carpet. The younger children were absorbed in their lessons at the table, where the father sat reading his newspaper.

All were silent, for to have spoken while

father was reading would have been an
forgivable offense. At last, however,
Stillman lifted his eyes from the paper
addressing Tom, said: "Well, how did
get along at school to-day?"

"Oh, first-rate," said the boy; but
lost head mark rankled in his mind,
he added, "Rachel was called up by
teacher."

"How was that, Rachel?" said her fath
sharply. Poor girl! Deep in the myster
of long division, she did not hear him.

"Rachel," he repeated, "what were y
called up in school for to-day?"

She glanced reproachfully at Tom.
read a little in the 'Pilgrim's Progres
father. It 's not a story-book—"

"Never mind what it is. I send you
school to study, and you 're not to touch an
but your school-books."

"May I bring it home?" she faltered.

"Bring it home, indeed! No, miss.
guess you can find enough to do at home
Not another word more, or you will stay a
home for good."

The child bent over her slate; but tears would come, and at last a sob burst forth.

"Clear out to bed, Rachel," said her father, angrily. "I want no sniveling here."

Up-stairs, in the cold, dark room, what bitter thoughts surged through the childish brain!

Mr. Stillman loved his wife and children. He wanted them to be happy, but in his way. He must choose their pleasures. If they could not be satisfied with what he chose for them, it was not his fault; it was their perversity. And as no two souls are alike, the attempt to fit a number of them by the same pattern necessarily caused suffering to the souls undergoing the operation.

Mrs. Stillman's sensitive organization was completely crushed; her eldest daughter's nearly so. Martha, the second daughter, had escaped by marrying a clever young man, who first pitied, then loved the daughter of his employer, and persuaded her to elope with him, assuring her of a happier home than she had with her father.

The marriage angered Mr. Stillman greatly,

and all intercourse with the disobedi
daughter was forbidden.

Margaret, the third daughter, also rebe
at the fitting process; and having a go
portion of her father's determination, n
were the sharp words that passed bet
them.

So far Rachel and Susan had giv
trouble. He ordered them about as
his dumb animals, and with no more
to their feelings. With his sons
different. They would be men so
They must be treated with some co
tion. At an early age John, two ye
than Elizabeth, was given a shar
stock, and land to cultivate, so th
at the age of twenty-four, he marri
a "right good start in the world."

But his sister toiled early and late
ironing, milking, churning, bakin
the younger children, sharing he
labors, and paid as her mother
her board and a scanty, grudgi
wardrobe. She was now twent
had never had a five-dollar bill

ɜased in her life; for that matter, : had the mother. There are many ;illmans. "Are they honest men?" ner and son have the right to be paid ıeir labor, have not the mother and ıter? I leave the question with you.

,chel carried a heavy heart to school next ıing. The tinker's wonderful allegory to was very real, and to leave her hero in ; awfull dungeon was almost more than could bear. When at recess the teacher ɜred her the book she did not take it.

"Father said," she began; then sobs .oked her utterance. He understood, and ter a moment's silence said: "I am interɜted in Christian as well as you, Rachel, and ɪ you will sit here I will read to you." In ıll her after-life Rachel never forgot these readings at intermission, which were continued not only until Christian reached the Celestial City, but until Christiana and the children completed their wonderful journey to the same place. Her gratitude to her young teacher would certainly have become love had she been a few years older. As it

was, when in March the term closed, not even the prize as the best speller—a beautiful copy of "Pilgrim's Progress"—consoled her for the cessation of school.

As for the teacher, he was glad the winter's work—which had been undertaken and conscientiously carried through solely for the purpose of obtaining means to pursue the study of his profession—was over. He liked some of his scholars very much, Rachel especially; she was so interested in her studies, so intelligent and grateful, that when, with eyes swimming in tears, she bade him good-by, he felt a moment's sorrow at leaving her, and comforted her by telling her what a good girl she had been, and that he would not forget her.

"You ought to have seen Rache an' Suse cry when old Gray bid us good-by," said Tom that evening at home.

"Did you cry?" asked Margaret.

"Guess not! Glad school 's out; an' I 'm never goin' any more."

"I would n't if I were you, bub," said Margaret; "you know enough now." She

always called him "bub" when she wanted to vex him. "But 'old Gray,' as you call him, will be somebody yet; see if he don't—"

The entrance of Mr. Stillman closed the conversation, and Tom went out, banging the door after him. No wonder Maidie was getting ill-natured.

The winter was a long, dull season at Stillman's. Even her enjoyment at the few social gatherings she was permitted to attend in the neighborhood was marred by the knowledge that she could not entertain her young friends in return. She had attempted once to fix up the "spare room" and have a fire for some company, but her father had peremptorily forbidden it. "I 'd like to know," he said, "why the settin'-room ain't good enough! If your company is too nice to be with the rest of the family, they can stay away, miss."

And "they" generally did stay away after one visit. Mr. Stillman was not a success as a host, young people thought; and a young minister who came home from meeting one Sunday with Elizabeth was so completely

abashed by the cool reception he
not even the daughter's pleading e
persuade him to remain in her fathe
ence. A few weeks after he went to
tant appointment, and Elizabeth's sad
grew sadder than ever.

Jim Lansing, the son of a widow
managed a farm and two grown sons
equal skill, was more successful. He usu
brought his mother with him, and while
entertained Mr. and Mrs. Stillman, Jim,
girls, and the carpet rags escaped to
kitchen.

But spring was near, and Marga
thought, "He can't keep us out of
spare room in summer; and, besides, we
be out of doors."

June came, with her blue skies, her sir
ing birds, her wealth of beauty. But the
was no time at Stillman's to enjoy it.
larger crop than usual had been put in,
extra hands employed — but not in the hou
Why, there were five women, counting fr
little ten-year-old Susy as one, and po
delicate Mrs. Stillman as another! Wh

:a help could they need, although wash- and cooking must be done for all the n? You see, "hands" could be got much ›aper if they were boarded—and what else l the women to do?

It was true, mother was not as strong as e used to be; but she did not complain. ıe was only more shadowy and quiet; and r. Stillman told his daughters to "stir round" themselves, and not let their mo- ner do all the work.

"Oh, dear," said Margaret, one morning, ıs she and Rachel were bending over the wash-tubs, while Susy labored at the heavy churning, and the mother and Elizabeth were preparing dinner, "I wish we could go to the picnic on the Fourth; everybody's going."

"Maybe we can," said Rachel, hopefully. "I heard father say the wheat was late this year, and he did not believe it would do to cut before the sixth. And oh, Margaret, I heard him say your calf would bring at least ten dollars; and if he gives you the money you can get a new white dress and give

me your old one. It is lots too small for you."

Margaret laughed. "Yes," she said, "father said if I could raise the calf I might have it. Did n't I have a time with it, though, it was so near dead! Of course I will fix my old dress up for you—that is, if I get the money. Sometimes I think father 's queer; he did not give Elizabeth the money when he sold that colt he had given her." And both girls were silent.

Out in the barn-yard, as the girls worked, Mr. Stillman and Tom were putting the pretty calf in the wagon preparatory to taking it to the butcher in the town a few miles distant. When the girls went in to dinner the men had finished theirs, and were lounging in the shady yard enjoying their nooning.

As they were about to sit down at the table, Mr. Stillman handed Margaret a package, saying, "There 's your share of that spotted calf, Margaret."

"My share!" she exclaimed. "Why, you gave me the calf; you had no right to it."

As she spoke she opened the package and

ed a piece of cheap lawn—yellow
d dotted with blue. She flung it
y on the floor and ran out of the

Stillman turned to Rachel after a mo-
of dumb amazement, and said: "You
ıave the dress, Rachel. I 'll teach
ıret a lesson."
don't want it," she said. "You had no
to take Margaret's money. You did
her the calf, and when you sold Tom's
ou gave him his money."
Nice girls you 're raising, mother," said
tillman to his frightened wife. "They 'll
ırning us out of doors next. You pick
nat lawn, miss."
ıchel did so. As she folded it he went
"That calf was mine. I only meant to
her for caring for it."
You should have told her so, then," said
daughter, facing him with eyes keen as
own; "but you told her if she could raise
ıhe might have it, and of course she
eved you."
[e raised his hand as if to strike her; then,

as she did not move or drop her eyes, turned and left the room.

July came, but the Stillman girls did not go to the picnic. Tom and the "hands" did and Mrs. Lansing and her boys stopped at Stillman's on their way and offered the girls seats in their wagon. But Mr. Stillman said his women had to get ready for the harvest hands who were coming next day, and Margaret said to Rachel, bitterly: "We have no decent clothes to go in, anyhow." And there was much washing, ironing, cooking, and churning done as the days went on. No wonder Mrs. Stillman grew paler and weaker, until even her husband noticed it, and brought her a bottle of bitters, and told the girls to "keep mother out of the kitchen," which they indeed tried to do. But how could the mother rest when there was so much to do? The girls could not manage as she could, and Elizabeth seemed "so poorly"; for the patient elder daughter, as the summer dragged along, had a pitifully hopeless look on her pale face, and went about listlessly, as if life had lost all interest for her.

At last there came a morning when the
other did not rise for breakfast.
"Had n't we better send for Dr. Lewis,
ther?" said Elizabeth.
"Oh, no; your mother did not sleep much,
was so hot last night. She 'll be up
irectly. You keep her out of the kitchen,
nd see you have dinner on time. We want
o finish to-day, for I expect we 'll have a
storm, from the feel of the air."
Noon came. Dinner for a dozen hungry
men was on the table, and still Mrs. Stillman
was in bed. While the men were eating
Rachel slipped in to her mother. She was
awake, but her flushed face and wild, bright
eyes startled the girl.
"Oh, mother!" she cried, "you are very
sick; you must have the doctor."
"No, dear," the mother answered; "father
is too busy now. I 'll be better after a while.
You go help wait on the table."
Rachel returned to the dining-room.
"Take that fly-brush, Rachel," said her
father. "Susy 's no account; she 's too
lazy to keep it going."

Poor, tired little Susy, who had done
large churning that morning, crimson
the roots of her hair as she handed Rach
the brush and hurried out of the room.

When dinner was over Mr. Stillman glare
into the room where his wife lay. "She
asleep," he said. "I guess she 's all right.
"She has n't eaten a thing to-day," sai
Rachel. "Had n't she better have th
doctor?"

"Well," said her father, impatiently, "i
she 's no better in the morning I 'll send fo
him"; and he went back to the field.

Rachel went for Mrs. Lansing, for she and
her sisters grew frightened as the mother's
fever increased. When that good woman
came she saw at once the serious condition
of her friend.

"I saw Dr. Lewis coming down the road in
his buggy as I came," she said. "One of
you hurry out and stop him."

When, about five o'clock, the rain began
to fall in torrents, Mr. Stillman had the sat-
isfaction of seeing the last load of grain
driven inside the barn door; and taking off

his hat, he wiped the moisture from his face, saying: "Well, boys, we beat the rain, and I don't care if it pours down now."

He walked toward the house, and, to his surprise, saw the well-known figure of Dr. Lewis on the front porch. "Driven in by the rain," he thought. "I'll get him to give mother a little medicine."

"How are you, doctor?" he said, as he stepped upon the porch. "Lucky getting my wheat in, was n't I?"

"Very," said the doctor, gravely; "but I am sorry to say I find Mrs. Stillman a very sick woman. You should have sent for me long ago." The husband was startled.

"Why," he said, "she has been going about until to-day. I guess it 's this weather has made her so weak. She can't be very sick."

The physician was silent for a moment; then he said: "If there is not a change for the better soon, I fear she will live but a few days. I cannot understand how she has kept up"; and he turned and went into the sick-room.

For once the men at Stillman's ate a cold supper and did the milking. Mrs. Lansing took things into her own capable hands. John and his wife were sent for and came, and Jim Lansing quietly hitched up a team and went for Martha and her husband—poor Martha, who had not seen her mother for more than a year!

All night Mr. Stillman watched by the bedside or walked up and down the long back porch. It could not be she would die—his wife. It was the hot weather; she was just weak and tired. That was it, Mr. Stillman—worn out, tired; and rest was coming. When Martha came the mother who had so longed for her did not recognize her.

"Mother, only speak to me!" cried the daughter in anguish; but the mother looked at her with dimming eyes that saw no more of earth, and muttered as she turned upon her couch, "Hurry, girls; it 's nearly noon. Hurry! Father will be angry if he has to wait."

Then she grew quiet; only her restless hands, which her daughters vainly strove to

hold, kept reaching out as if to grasp that unknown land she was so soon to enter; and before the sun was high in the morning Mrs. Stillman had found rest.

Her husband was stunned. With haggard face he bent over his dead. "If I had known!" he said. "Oh, my wife, if I had known, I would have taken better care of you."

Ah, Mr. Stillman, you are not the only one who with remorseful heart cries, "If I had only known, if I had only known!"

Life went on as usual at Stillman's after the mother had left them. For a while the father was kinder, but as time went on the old habit was resumed. Elizabeth went mechanically about her work, and her father did not notice her evidently failing health. Her quietness was a relief to him, for Margaret was growing more defiant toward him, and quarreled constantly with Tom, who, now that his mother's influence was withdrawn, became more and more meddlesome and overbearing in his conduct toward his sisters. The summer following Mrs. Stillman's

death, Mrs. Lansing's eldest son, Fran
unto himself a wife; and late in the
neighborhood was electrified by th
pected marriage of Mrs. Lansing h
Stillman. Her boys, on learning sai
tion, had remonstrated; but she
boys do not need me, and these
Think of a young girl like Rac
'God had nothing to do with
death. It was hard work kill
when I tried to tell her of
His creatures she said: '
enough to men. All He
to create them for men's
then there 's little Susy
mother's. Why, it just
"Well," said Jim, "t
over there; but it is
haunts me, by any mea
His mother laughed.
of Margaret," she said.
need some one to look a
being worked to death."
Four years have slipped
of the Stillmans—years w

Rachel and Susy at the academy in the town near their father's farm; years which gave Margaret's happiness into Jim Lansing's keeping, and made Jim a young man of whom his sisters were extremely proud. Even Elizabeth's sad face looks as if life might be worth living, for under the second wife life at Stillman's had taken on a different color. The spare room is a pretty sitting-room for the young folks.

"We don't want them always with us," says Mrs. Stillman, as she shows her husband the change she has made; for one of her peculiarities is that she manages her household affairs as she thinks best, taking it for granted that her husband will approve. As for Rachel, she enjoyed the change for the better; but now to the bitter feeling which she cherished toward her father was added a touch of contempt. "See," she thought, "how he can be flattered into doing things; if my mother could have managed him so she might have lived."

Rachel was mistaken; the new wife did not manœuver or flatter: she simply took her

proper place as mistress of the house =
as a sort of upper servant, to be snubbed
praised, at the master's humor.

Another summer had been added
Rachel's years when, one evening, Tom ca
home from town, and entering the dinin
room where she was preparing the table
supper, exclaimed, "Rachel, do you reme
ber old Gray, as I used to call him, w
taught our school the winter before moth
died?"

"Yes," she said, "I remember him. M
ther liked him."

"Well, I met him in town to-day. He
on that Sanders case. He knew me right o
and he 's coming out here this evening, s
fix up nice and be looking your sweetes
They say he 's smart; I heard some of th
old lawyers talking about him." And Tom
caught his sister about the waist and waltzed
her out on the porch.

"Rachel," said Susy, as, in their own room,
the girls were dressing after supper, "you
are very hard to please to-night, and you
seem nervous. What ails you?"

Rachel smiled. "I am thinking of old days, that is all," she said. But she entered the little parlor where Tom and the guest were seated in a perfectly self-possessed manner, saying as she held out her hand:

"Good evening, teacher. How goes the battle with Apollyon?"

And the young lawyer sprang to his feet, exclaiming, "Rachel! is it possible?" and he retained her hand and looked into her eyes so long that Susy, who had followed her into the room, and Tom declared that he fell in love then and there. However that may be, it is certain Mr. Gray showed a wonderful interest in Stillman's district. The trial in progress at Meywood was tedious, but his patience did not give out; and when some of the lawyers proposed to hold night sessions of court he objected earnestly, saying, "It would be too hard on the old judge."

But all things must end, and the case was at last decided in favor of Mr. Gray's client. As Rachel congratulated him on his victory, he said, with a look that brought the color to her face:

"How long must I stay in Doubting C
Rachel?"

"Why, dear me," she answered, sa
"I did not think a promising young la
as father calls you, ever got into s
dismal place!"

Then Susy came in, and the your
bade her good-by; but he whispered
of speedy return to Rachel, and as he
homeward those wonderful eyes
seemed to haunt him.

"Who would have thought," h
himself, "she could have becom
woman? No wonder I could not
to suit me, when she has been my
You see, he was trying to pers
self he had thought of her ever
term of school; and it may be, u
himself, those eyes had held him
rate, he says they did; and when,
time, they drew him back to Stillm
last made Rachel believe it, and
little key of promise she delivered
Doubting Castle.

Let us take one more look, two y

he Stillman homestead. There is a family hering, and all the girls are present— rtha and Margaret with their sturdy boys l rosy girls; Rachel with her baby; and y, a gay young aunt, flits to and fro, play- with and teasing the little ones. Eliza- ı, with unwonted brightness in her eyes, s on, enjoying the merriment.

Does n't it seem odd," whispers Mar- t, "that Lizzie's minister should come after all these years?"

'es," answers Rachel, in the same low "I am so glad. She seems so happy."

husbands are all present in the even- nd the old house is full of light and . Rachel slips up-stairs to put baby ; and as she sits in the room where so niserable hours of her childhood were her tears fall, thinking of herself and ır, patient mother who had suffered d; and the old bitterness rises in her Baby stirs, and she hushes him, then ı gently in the old cradle and goes ırs. Some impulse prompts her the sitting-room instead of the

parlor, where she think
gathered.

As she opens the doo
sitting, as of old, by the
lamp is burning, and sh
out; but something in h
her. He is not reading
lies untouched; he is lo
in his hand.

She notices how gray
age is tracing lines on h
feeling sick, father?" sh

"Oh, no," he says. "I
and he hands her a fade
her mother, taken when s
bride. "I was thinking

"How much like Sus
tears falling on the lovel

"Yes, only she was pr
"I have been thinking of
Rachel. I am going to
would please her. I have
little place of Perry's, an
and her husband on it.
dustrious fellow; but it

thing on a rented farm, and Martha 's worried too much. You don't think any of the children will object?" and he looked anxiously in her face.

"Object? Why, they will be glad, father!" And dropping her head on his shoulder, she puts her arm around him for the first time in her life; and as she slips the little daguerreotype in his hand a sweet peace fills her heart, and she thinks, "The bitterness is gone, and love fills its place." After a while she joins the group in the parlor. They are singing to Susy's accompaniment on the organ.

"Sing 'Coronation,' Susy," she says, as she sits down beside her husband and glances lovingly in his face.

"What is it?" he whispers. "You are unusually happy."

"Yes," she answers; "I have had a vision of the land of Beulah, where Love is king."

A GAME POSTPONED

BY

GERTRUDE SMITH

A GAME POSTPONED

IT had been snowing for two days, and now the snow-plows were out, and the first really good sleighing of the winter would begin.

The great fields lay in unbroken whiteness. The woods along the banks of the Iowa River were billows of snow. The large farm-houses, and the number and size of the barns and other outlying buildings, gave evidence of the richness of the soil that lay buried and resting for another harvest.

Judge Hilton's house had the distinction of being built of brick. There was a dignity in its solidity over the usual white frame-houses on the surrounding farms that well became the dignity of the judge.

The judge was New England born and bred. There is the veneration for Puritan ancestry in the entirely Western soul that the Puritan mind still has for good old English blood.

Isabel Hilton was her father's housekeeper and only child. The mother had died while she was a baby, and she had ruled the house and been ruled by her father since that time.

She had all her father's reserve and pride of family, and at the same time his happy nature and gracious manner, that won her friends when she desired to make friends. Those who found it impossible to win their way into her favor called this reserve in Isabel—her "down East airs." There was a discouraging belief among the young men in the country around, some of whose fathers owned farms and herds of cattle large enough to divide and establish them in enviable beginnings, that if the judge thought any of them worthy to win his daughter's love there would never be an opportunity to gain the consent of the young lady.

The judge had theories against Isabel's

entertaining young men alone, nor permit her to go with any escort but

The privilege of spending the ever Isabel, in the presence of her fat considered a mark of distinction, a the one so honored on the wave of h

"If a fellow had the backbone to the judge some night, he might pro the daughter," was the comment Mr. man made to his son one day. Clint l man had been one of Isabel's most per admirers.

"The trouble with all of you is, y there shaking in your boots, and to the judge, and come away with th head because you dared do that; but you, if I was a young fellow I 'd outsit I sat the break of day. It's son pluck that the judge is looking raised and he knows her value ar n't cheap to none of you. go i d of the other fellows a in, I ten thousand doll you a of land. Come, what y nade of!"

CLINT.

In some way this lordly promise got adrift the current of country gossip, and roused *the* admirers of Isabel, one and all, to new interest in the contest. Large stories were *told* of the late hours the judge kept that winter with Isabel's suitors.

Clint Holderman drove over to the brick house early on the evening that he had *set* his mind with flint-like determination to give his father's advice the trial.

ISABEL.

It was a cold night, and
in his new cutter, drawn by
of black horses, and wel
buffalo-robes, his heart wa
He had spent many even
playing chess with the jud
of his welcome; but to-nigh
all this. He thought of
at last, with his heart
touched, the judge wou

night, and he should be left alone with Isabel.

There was no handsomer young man in the country than Clint Holderman; none who danced better, or who drove better horses; but more than all this, the judge had repeatedly told him that he had never known a man who played a better hand at chess.

This was an encouragement indeed; for if the judge had a weakness, it was for chess, and it would be decidedly pleasant to have a son-in-law who could be to him such a ready source of entertainment. As he drove into the yard, the judge came out on the side piazza.

"Good evening," he called out. "Just drive on to the barn; the man will put out your horses."

One of the farm-hands came out of the stable as he spoke, and Clint threw him the reins and followed the judge into the house.

"Snapping cold, but splendid sleighing," the judge said, while Clint was pulling off his overcoat in the hall.

"Yes. I believe my ears are touched," Clint answered, rubbing them.

"Isabel is popping some corn. Sh
glad you happened over to help eat it
He led the way into the long sitting
at the end of the hall.

Isabel was on her knees before an
wood fire, shaking a corn-popper.

The white kernels snapped and exp
with a pleasant sound.

The lamp had not been lit, but the fir
made the room bright and cozy.

"Isabel, here is Mr. Holderman, my
She sprang up.

"I did n't hear you come in. Good
ing. Come over here by the fire. Why
Clint!" she said, as he came into the g
"I thought father meant your father
never think of you as Mr. Holderman. I
some corn."

She held the popper open before h
"I 'm sure I never think of you as Miss
ton," he said, plunging his hand into the co
and laughing. "That would be a little
much like strangers, as long as we 've kn
each other."

The judge cleared his throat.

"I have always decidedly disliked the informality of country people in calling every one by their Christian names," he said. "It leaves no degree in intimacy. But I suppose it is impossible to know where to draw the line."

Isabel went back and knelt before the fire again.

"Oh, I don't know," she said, shaking the popper vigorously. "As long as it is a custom, I don't think any one feels it a mark of special intimacy, and so the custom is protected by being a custom."

The young man sat awkwardly in his chair, and was silent.

They seemed to be closing the doors against any thought he might have of closer intimacy with the family.

The judge left the room for a moment, and came back with a lighted lamp and placed it on the claw-legged table in the center of the room. He had put on a long dressing-gown faced with crimson quilted silk, and now he drew his great chair up before the fire, and stretched himself out in it.

"Come, Clint, I w
popper for me, and I
get some apples."]
with a merry twinkl
held the handle towa
out of the room.

Clint grasped the
with the delight of su
Isabel had never befo
to believe that she ca
compare with that lo

Daylight would find
but he would beat the
the opportunity of sp

It was a delightfu
partook of the pop-cor
was more than usua
taining.

Isabel sat on the o
place, and crocheted
There were pink spo
and her eyes were ve

The time passed o
On the mantel clearly
the hour of ten.

It had been comparatively easy this far, but now was the time when Clint usually went home.

The real contest was about to begin.

The judge shoved his chair back to the table, picked up a paper, and began to read.

From time to time he glanced over the top of his paper at the two talking before the fire, but still read on.

When the clock struck eleven he threw the paper down, pulled his chair back to the fire, and drew the young man into an animated political discussion.

Isabel stirred about the room, putting things in order for the night.

It was nearing midnight. For the last fifteen minutes the conversation had begun to lag.

There were cold moments of complete silence.

"Had you noticed that I had traded horses?" Clint asked in one painful pause.

"No; have you?" Isabel asked, coming forward with interest.

"Yes; I 've traded the grays for George

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"I don't know about that," the judge laughed; "and I don't know about the temper, either," he added, reaching up and pinching her cheek.

"I never liked red hair, but I 'm sure I don't believe in that sign," Clint said clumsily. He gazed fixedly into the fire, and felt as though he were turning to stone.

The clock struck twelve with a resonant, defiant stroke, as though it understood the contest in which it held the stakes, and refused to commit itself as to whose side would win.

At a quarter past twelve the judge stood up.

Clint felt his heart beating wildly. The moment of triumph was at hand.

The judge crossed to the bay-window at the other end of the room. Isabel's eyes followed him nervously.

From one side, among the geraniums and ivy, he drew the chess-table, and pushed it before him toward the fire.

"I think it would be pleasant for us to have a game of chess," he said affably.

Clint spr:

"Oh, tha
going home

"Oh, mu
and we 'll g

It seeme
himself out
spinning al

He woul
in his defea
in Isabel's
corn-poppe
ridicule, an
look.

And so h
fast the ne
his voice
father anc
sister:

"Never
through
first gun.
house I w
up the fig

"Oh, y

carry her off. I guess I'm safe enough on the cash and land I promised you," his father answered with a provoking laugh.

"Don't you count on it," Clint said, springing up from the table with fire in his eyes. "I 'm not downed yet, I tell you."

"All right, sonny; we 'll give a big dance to celebrate your engagement, and an oyster supper. I suppose there 's no rush about ordering the oysters?"

"I 'll hold you to that," Clint said, bringing his fist up against the door. "If the thing 's settled by Saturday week, we 'll have the dance. If it is n't—well, it won't be. I 'm going over to town after the mail."

He turned and went out of the room. As the door closed, he heard his sister say, tittering:

"Clint has about as hard a time courting Isabel as you had courting mother."

This was a warm thought of comfort to him. At least Isabel had never denied him her love, and he knew that his mother had been hardly won.

It was a bright winter morning.

him was a clear stretch o
River, three miles away.

The white fields on eith
the sunlight. The grea
along the fences, looked
of their fantastic terraci
never was better.

All at once Clint hear
bells, and a voice called t
road!"

He turned, and saw
toward him, driving h
a fearful rate.

Clint drove quickly
road, and she sped by

He saw that her hors

There had been no
though she was holdin
strength, and had loo
nor the left as she
was one thing more
Holdermans prided
their knowledge of
did horsemanship.

Isabel Hilton's l

ing in driving them had been one of the first things that had won Clint's admiration. Her control and courage now appealed to him tremendously. His own horses seemed to have caught the spirit of the runaway pair ahead, as they flew along over the snow after them.

Clint knew that at any moment Isabel's slight arms might lose the power to hold those tense reins so securely, and the horses dash to one side, and the crash come, and there was nothing he could do. On went the cutter ahead of him, swaying to the left and the right, but still keeping the road. The bridge across the Iowa River was just ahead. Clint thought of the bridge with terror. If the cutter swayed to one side, as it was doing now, the crash would come on entering.

He saw Isabel's strength tightening on the reins, and knew that she felt the danger.

Her horses flew up the slight incline to the bridge, and Clint braced his nerves to withstand the shock. But, to his amazement, he saw that the horses were slowing up and entering the bridge with all the respect of

well-trained ho
were over the
were walking a
decided on th
excitement.

Clint entere
leaving it. Sl
road, and wait

"I 'll let y
you want to,"

"Look here
think of those
that way, I 'd

"Yes; did
not, but I thou
them in the ro
doing it?"

"Well, no.
about," he ans
ingly.

Isabel's face
smiling.

"I was n't af
clear, but I sho
had seen a tean

"Talk of pluck!" Clint said, driving a little nearer to her cutter. "Isabel, what did you think of last night? What did you think of me, anyway?"

She drove out into the road ahead of him, and then looked back over her shoulder, laughing. "I thought, if you had only waited half an hour longer I would have been eighteen. It is my birthday to-day. I 'm of age." And with that she touched her ponies with the whip, and kept well ahead of him all the way to the village.

When they met again it was before the fire in the sitting-room at the brick house, where they had held the hours the night before. But the contest with the judge had lost its seriousness.

Between them he sat, imperturbable, as he had sat the night before; but to-night he was only an amusing barrier, and not a serious obstruction. Love had leaped the bounds, and was free. It triumphed in their eyes as they looked across him, and over him, smiling knowingly at each other.

"We 're going to have a dance over at our

A C

house Saturda
It is going to
event in our fa
a meaning gest
"What 's th
ing?" the judg
spectacles.

"Well, that 's
to-morrow. I h
must be sure a
have a great tir
The judge lo
think we can g
Her cheeks
should think we
"Thank you, 1
said, leaning ba
at the ceiling.
play that game
night?"

It was evident
ing up the field.
was not as fearl
supposed. His
Isabel pressed

and looked into the fire. The clock ticked loudly, emphasizing the silence.

Finally the judge brought his eyes from the ceiling, and looked at the young man.

"Did n't you hear what I said to you?" he asked, running his hand through his forelock, and grasping the arm of his chair.

"Yes, sir, I did," said Clint, respectfully.

"Well, then?"

"If you 'll allow me to say it, sir, I think I 've won the game already."

"What 's that?"

"I believe, sir, I 've won the game."

The judge glared at him for a moment, and then his eyes fell on Isabel.

He looked from one to the other.

The ticks of the clock seemed to choke each other.

"Well, my boy," he said, drawing a deep breath,—the tears had started to his eyes,—I don't know but you have." He held out his hand. "I don't know but you have, my boy."

"Thank you, sir; thank you."

Her father reached the other hand to

Isabel, and stood up an
arms; then pushed her fr
the room to the door lead
Isabel's eyes followed h
He turned and looked b
smiled.

"Well, children, I 'm fee
to-night," he said, "and I th
kind enough to excuse me, I
He went out and shut the

WHEN SHE WAS

IT was Eleanor Gray's t
Suddenly she awoke to t
youth, with its vague hop
over. She had never qui
swiftly the years were pas
so like another, and the
young, she half thought t
a young girl still, and
waiting round the corn
had held her by the h
there was a cruel positiv
thirty. So many years
years of charm and expe
there be to come now?
been, even in the past?

She went back, in her thoughts, over the life she had lived, and regarded it as if it had been that of some other person. She had been born in the wrong family, she said to herself; that was the beginning. They loved her well, the practical, unimaginative parents whose only child she was; but they had never understood what she meant. Her ways were not as their ways, nor her thoughts as their thoughts. They had been proud of her in some uncomprehending fashion, but they had smiled at her aspirations and ambitions as at the amusing vagaries of a petted infant. They gave her the harp on which she wanted to play just as they had given her the talking doll she had coveted and made friends with when she was a child. They let her buy herself poetry books just as they had let her buy sweetmeats. They were good and dear,—oh, *so* good and dear!—she said to herself on this morning of her thirtieth birthday. But they did not know her. No one had ever known her; of that she felt certain.

She took a little hand-mirror from her dressing-table, and began to study her face

in it. The features had not changed v
much since she was twenty. Perhaps
eyes were a little more sad, and the che
had not quite the wild-rose bloom that

longed to them ten years ago; but re
there was not so very much differer
Then she held the glass nearer and loo
in it a little more closely. There were—

there were—wrinkles, slight yet unmistakable, at the corners of her eyes. They were big blue eyes, by the way, with black lashes. The young gold of her hair was turning autumnal brown; and the lips that had never been warmed by kisses seemed to have grown thinner.

"Yes," she said; "ah, yes; I *am* older. I can see it in the glass. I am not so pretty as I was; but what good did the prettiness do? Who ever loved me really, unless—" She did not finish the sentence. If she had it would have been "unless Tom did."

And then she laid down the glass, and her thoughts went on a long journey, back to the far-away days when Tom Rhodes used to come home with her from all sorts of places, and look at her with such eloquent eyes that she had not forgotten their language even yet. She had never let him go farther than looking, however. The world—her unconquered kingdom—was all before her in those days, and she did not mean to take Tom for prime minister. He was a dear good fellow—she used always to think that when she thought

about him at all. But
the world, and painters
Tom—was only Tom. He
winter, and was busy on h
small farm in the summ
would, you could not fan
of a conquering hero.
from speaking, and fina
died, and he had sold
gone away to that vagu
known in those days as
he had done there, or v
him, who knew? Not F

She wondered if it we
to other women to feel t
old. It seemed to her j
was all—all. She had c
now in the cup were dre
she sadly smiled. Wha
quaffed, after all? Peo
beautiful,—and surely
at least pretty—but wh
her? The right suitor
the few who seemed t
thought in this hour or

membered tones and looks, shy flowers shyly given, tender little cares for her comfort in small things. But in those old days her ambition soared far beyond Tom. Would it have been better had she cared for him? Would *he* have understood her? Would *love* have made *that possible?* For *she felt now* that *her deepest* longing *had always* been *to be* understood. Love that was given to the external Eleanor would never have been enough. She must meet some one who had the key to her deepest soul, else must she live and die more solitary than any monk of old in his hidden hermitage.

Could it be that she had thrown away what

might have been life'
well, it was of no use
was far away, and sh
Just then she saw t
coming slowly down
up the window, and
hand for the letters
all from school-girl
glanced at the hand
She was not in the
them. "Drearily
herself as she ope
dropped from it un
listlessly. Sudder
had come to this
you speak of Ton
yours, was he not?
I inclose be his?"
Eleanor picked
the floor and st
the Denver (Co
read:

"Thomas J.
Margaret Eliza,

q., President of the Wheel of Fire Mining
mpany."

So that was what had become of Tom.
e had not remembered the J. in his name,
t of course it must be Tom. There could
rdly be another Tom Rhodes of Connecti-
t. It sounded prosperous, this marriage
the daughter of the president of a mining
mpany. So this was the end of her one
e lover. She had never said before, even
herself, that she knew Tom loved her; but
acknowledged it to her own heart now.
was as if a window had been opened into
past, and a great flood of light poured
m a day whose sun had long since set.
Yes, Tom had loved her, and Tom would
e understood. He and she might have
n one, if only she had known—if only
t weak ambition she used to think so
ong and fine had not held her heart in
thrall. She had the New England con-
ence, and it was borne in upon her mind
t she ought to wish Tom to be happy in
new love, this new life. Did she? She

tried to cheat herself into thinking so, but her soul defied her. "You know well," cried the voice of conscience within her, "that you don't want him to be quite, quite happy. You would n't like him to be absolutely miserable, but you want him to be something short of satisfied; to say to himself every day, and every day, 'Ah! Eleanor would not have done this, or said that; Eleanor would have understood better.'"

And then conscience cried aloud, "Oh, you poor, small soul! Is that the best of which you are capable? You would not care for him when he might have been yours; he was not grand enough for you then; and now you would wish him something short of life's best good!" And she listened to the voice, and, afraid of herself, she cried out for strength; and it was as if her guardian angel leaned from the heights of heaven and drew her quivering soul upward to a purer air. Then the impulse came to her to write a letter which should convey to Tom her wishes for his happiness—wishes wholly honest now.

She lingered over it for some time. She

She addressed this letter to
Rhodes, care of John Riding, Esq.,
Colorado." She sealed and posted
then the thirty-year-old young wor
that she had indeed turned the last
her youth, and the "appendix" of
was already begun.

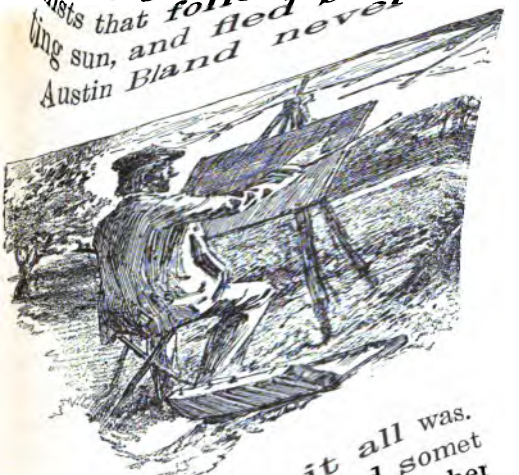
It was not long after this that
comer to the quiet old town of
made Miss Gray's acquaintance.
last—so it seemed—came the
knight of romance of whom Elea
dreamed. Austin Bland was poet and
both; one glory was not enough for h
had come to the little Connecticut
paint some of its beguiling bits o
and meadow-land, some of its fan
trees that seemed fairly human, t
lived so long and were so full of way
dividuality. His pictures, he said,
sale; his poems, on the other hand,
the property of the world. He su
was unfortunate, but the truth wa
utterly subjective. His verses, suc
were, were the very cry of his h

surely they did not belong in the market-place!

From the first Bland seemed to take an especial interest in Eleanor. Naturally this interest flattered her. It had been many years since any man had so persistently sought her society, and now, here in her "appendix" of life, came the conquering hero, ready to turn subject for her sake, eager to paint her charms and to sing her praises. Was it, then, for him that she had unconsciously been waiting, and was it when she was past thirty that she was really to begin to live? It seemed so, just at first.

Bland had brought one or two good letters,—for even in rural Ryefield letters were necessary,—and he had met Eleanor at a high tea at the rectory, the very first week after his arrival. It was the glorious midsummer—the long golden days when the sun seems so in love with earth that he sets reluctantly; when all the world is at its best, and the birds sing its praises, and the butterflies flutter lazily about as if to see in what a beautiful sphere they are allowed to

pass their little day. The
at evening in the valley of
mists that followed the sple
ting sun, and fled before th
Austin Bland never tired



infinitely precious it all was.
studied the trees, and somet
Eleanor. He sketched her
whom she certainly did n
Iseult, whom she might hav
Rosamond with the fatal cup
herself, in a score of attitu

verses to her in French metres—rondeaux, triolets and ballades; and these, he told her, were for her only—that cry of his heart which none other than herself must hear. It was all so delightfully romantic that Eleanor began to think she was quite sufficiently in love with him, though love was somehow a less strenuous and exciting emotion than she had hitherto supposed. She was rather glad sometimes to be left alone at the close of an afternoon of art and of romance. Of course this was because she was thirty. There could be no doubt that it was the right thing—this high-bred passion that wooed her with all the resources of art. Bland had not spoken of the future, but that must be because he was too delicately reserved to approach her rashly.

At last there came a July twilight. Bland and Eleanor had been watching the sunset together. He had been talking about his theories of sunset effects. He was always talking about his theories; they were for him the one significant and sufficient theme. Then, when the sun had fairly gone out of

sight, Bland got up to dep
stood for a moment looking th
Eleanor.

"I must see you to-morro
"Shall it be at three o'clock? I
thing to say to you."

"Yes; at three, if you will," she
and then he was gone, and she s
in the waning light. Of course he
ing to ask her to be his wife. H
manner had expressed his intent
was as certain of it as if he had
spoken. Why was she not more
Why did she always feel just a lit
when they had been for some hours t
Of course it would be a glorious de
be what he had called her—the quee
art, to share his ambitions, to be t
fidant of his dreams. She ought su
be grateful to fate, and surely she wa
thirty, no doubt, the time for ecstasy is
She looked out into the vague distance
saw some one walking toward her under
trees that fringed the highway. T
seemed something familiar in the com

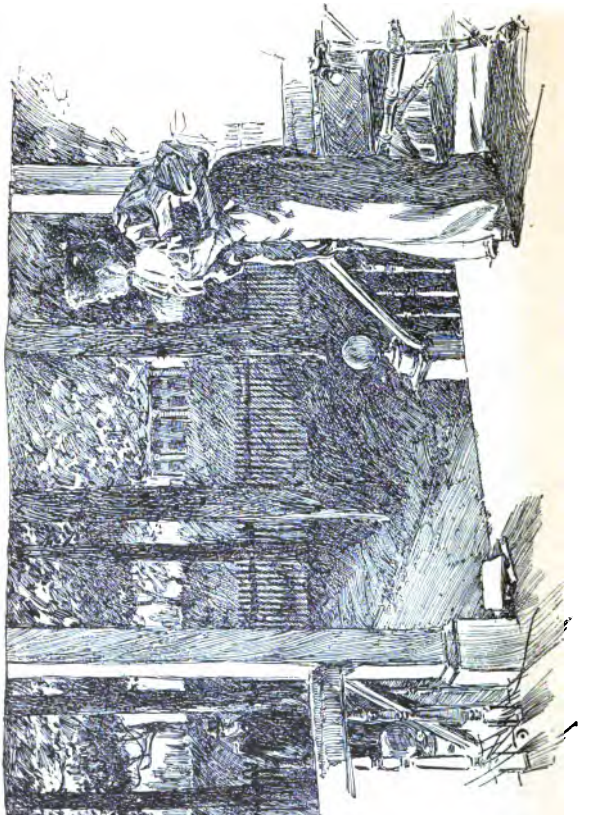


figure. She caught her breath quic
Were her eyes deceiving her? No; it
—it absolutely was—Tom Rhodes! As
in a dream, she got up and moved forw
to meet him; for he had turned in at
gate now.

She seemed hardly to know what strar
thing stirred in her thirty-year-old he
when he took her hand in a strong, cl
clasp.

"You, Tom?" she cried, "you?"

"Yes, Eleanor; the same old Tom."

"And your wife? Where is she?"

"Here, darling, if only I can win her

"What!"

"Yes. I am not Thomas J. Rhodes
is my second cousin; from Connecticu
but from quite another part of the Sta
am Thomas Rhodes, at your service
same Tom who loved you years ago, a
never thought of marrying any other
You made me feel, in the old days,
would be of no use to speak to you,
went away. But when I got your le
knew that you were Eleanor Gray

solved that if I did not win you, it should not be because I was too cowardly to ask. At least you have a right to know how long and well I have loved you. I have done no great things; I am neither hero nor poet nor statesman; but I have lived a clean, honest life, and there is not one page of it I am ashamed that you should read."

"You loved me—me—all this time?" she cried; and there was a little choking quiver in her voice.

"Yes," he answered solemnly; "I loved you, and you only, then and now and always; but you have not answered me yet, darling."

"Oh, I forgot that; but you know, don't you?"

And indeed Tom knew; for the eyes that looked into his lit the growing dusk with their great light of joy, and the lips that had been strangers hitherto to a lover's kiss yielded themselves to his once and forever. Eleanor was won.

After all, thirty was not old age. These two found that they were young enough still for ecstasy. The moon came up in the east

nd looked at them curio
were certainly lovers. Th
used to lovers, for she is nea
years old; and she is not li
mistake. Eleanor wondered
ever have fancied herself to
She wondered yet more that
known from the very first tha
and Tom only, to whom she be

At last she told him about A

"I have been trying all sum
him," she said frankly. "I tho
the thing to do; but I had got a
of trying. He is coming to see
o'clock to-morrow, because he has
important to say to me."

Tom laughed as a successful ma

"Well, I shall be away just the
going to Boston to get a ring whe
fetter you to good faith. Deal ge
the erring. I shall be back by th
o'clock train to console you for his

The next afternoon Austin Bla
punctual. He came as one who we
willow. Sadness was in his voice an

brow. A weed on his hat would not more clearly have emphasized him for sorrow's own.

"I go," he said; "I go this very night from you who are the queen of my art, and I must never see your too fair face again."

"What!" cried Eleanor, startled for once from her stronghold of composure.

"No, never! I am to be married next month to some one who loves me—but ah, she is not you! I have let myself forget all in the supreme joy of your presence; but I must forget no longer. Pity me! You can afford me so much grace. Circe, I dare not drink your cup."

It was really quite a masterly exhibition of histrionic power. It was hard-hearted and ungrateful of Eleanor to smile at it, as I am afraid I am bound to confess that she did.

"I am to be married almost as soon as you are," she said amiably, "to Mr. Tom Rhodes, one of the owners of the Wheel of Fire mine. But do not let us lose sight of each other. Your sketches of Ryefield scenery are quite too lovely. I should like to give you an

for some of them, that in far-off order Colorado I may not altogether feel bereaved of the old home."

"You are only too good—too good and kind," Austin Bland said mournfully; "but ah, I must really never see you again. Goupil & Co. are my agents. Farewell, queen of my summer!"

And he made his exit, this knight of the sorrowful countenance, after the most approved theories of romance. At half-past seven o'clock Eleanor told her little tale of the afternoon to Tom Rhodes; and then she said, with a laugh, "So you see I could n't have had him, after all; you are only Hobson's choice."

"No, thank God! I am Eleanor's."

NEIGHBOR KING

WHEN my husband, Micah
died, he left me alone wi
girl, the farm, an' the grass!
happened in Kansas, in '76.

You don't mind my crying,
'T seems as though I 'd never
all out of me. The time ain'
nor me so old, but that those d
before me like a panorama,
I can feel that hot summer s
in the sky, an' the smell of
movin' all the time in waves
got dizzy with the motion ar
the grasshoppers! You ca
came a-flyin' by day an' l

brown clouds; how they crept an' crawled an' squirmed through the wheat an' the corn an' the grass, bitin' an' chewin' every green thing, leavin' nothin' but black an' dry shreds, an' the earth more desolate than if a fire had swept over it. They were everywhere out of doors; they came into the house, —down the chimney when they could n't get in through the door,—an' I 've picked their bony bodies out of my pockets many a time, an' knocked 'em off the table so as I might put down a dish. If you killed one, a thousand came to the funeral. All day an' all night you heard the click, click, click of their bodies as they walked about, jumped here an' there, or rubbed against one another. An' poor Micah's body under the blanket —they were all about it, an' I havin' to brush 'em away. Anybody would 'a' cried if they 'd been in my place, such a dreary day was that—me an' baby all alone, with the village ten miles off, an' not a soul nearer than neighbor King, three miles away.

Seems to me I don't know how Micah died, it was all so sudden like. All day he 'd been

out in the sun a-fightin'
tryin' to work when he wa
he came in with his head a
an' not a smile on his lips
hat an' rolled down his slee
"I 'm downright discou
he said at last, lookin' out
"There 's no use in standin
an' the hoppers. They ea
kill 'em, an' in a week the cr
all gone. It looks as thou
comes we won't have any
b'lieve I 've killed ten th
creatures to-day, an' yet th
drops in a rain-storm."

Then he picked up little
down on the bed with her in
no more. I bustled round
ing, an' as quiet as possib
tired in mind an' body the
an' fixed up a nice supper.
was all set, an' the food on
as cheerful an' encouragin
would let me make it, I ca
he did n't answer. So I s

room, an' put my hand on his face so as to wake him gently, as I was used to doin'.

Oh, dear! oh, dear! The loved face was cold and white, an' I give one scream, an' fell beside him, knowin' nothin'. Yes, Micah was dead—gone to sleep, never to waken, passed from life with little Hannah snuggled in his arms.

No wonder I cry when I remember that lonesome night, holdin' the little one in my arms, an' watchin' the still face on the bed, knowin' that nevermore those eyes would look into mine, nevermore those cold lips would speak to me. An' when the mornin' came, gray an' hopeless, there was no one but me an' the baby an' poor Micah's body; an' the hoppers a-creepin' an' a-crawlin' all through the house as if they were a-buyin' of it at auction, a-rustlin' their wings an' a-hustlin' their bodies until I thought there was a cool wind instead of a hot, breathless mornin'. I covered up the dear face, an', kneelin' by his side, prayed an' cried, an' cried an' prayed. It was all I could do for my husband of three years. I don't know what else

I did, what else I thought. I
heard nothin', until somebody'
upon my shoulder.

"Why, Mrs. Pyncheon!" was
lookin' up through my tears, I sa
King a-standin' by me. "I was
road," he said, "an' thought I 'd
good mornin'. Where 's Mica
field, an' you a-cryin' for loneso

I answered nothin', but put up
pulled back the sheet from the de

"My God!" was all he said;
gered back to a chair, an' sat
minutes without a word, his
hands.

"Madam, forgive me! I ne
of such a thing," he cried at la
himself; "an' when an' how did

I told him the story between
down every few words. Than
was n't a long story, or I shou
crazy before it was told. He
quite a spell, as if he was a-m
the situation, lookin' mostly a
as if drawin' ideas from the co

Now, Mrs. Pyncheon!" he said finally, in
solemn voice an' grave, slow way of
in',—"now, Mrs. Pyncheon, you must
t everythin' to me. You beat out.
no women folks in my house, as you
; but I 'll ride to town, an' get an old
a friend of mine, to come out an' help
hrough. I 'll see, too, that poor Micah
coffin an' a minister. Be the brave
woman, Mrs. Pyncheon, that Micah
tell you to be, if he could speak. By
wn I 'll have somebody you can talk to
no 'll cheer you up better than I can.
rrow—to-morrow we 'll bury the poor
'

en he said this it set me to cryin'.
t was so still that I looked up an' found
f alone. A-down the road was a line
t, an' I heard the muffled footfall of
oor King's horse on his way to he
.

"to-morrow we 'll bury him" were
that all that long, lonesome, hot way
oundin' in my ears, as if some one was
'em out with the tickin' of the clock

"Bury him"—an' Micah de
hours! I could n't believe it
an' listen for his whistle at th
to the horses, his rattle at
footfall at the door, until, cra
I 'd go over to the bed, pull
an' in the still face read why
hear those happy sounds
again.

Ah, well! The sun went d
long, dreary day was ended;
light came back my good nei
therly Mrs. Challen—an'—an
even now to tell it—the coffin
it those two good people sof
an' all that night I watched its
me an' the window.

The next day, in the morn
trees in the little grove acr
house, my Micah was laid to r
placed so that when I looked o
dow or the door I could see t
earth between the fence of tre
around it, an', seein' it, know
spot was buried one who in t

was more to me than earth or heaven. I never understood how I got through those

"MRS. CHALLEN HELD ME IN HER ARMS."

two terrible days. I can't remember distinctly. It 's all dream-like, as if in a thin, grayish fog. I know that Mrs. Challen held

me in her arms—for I was a 1
thing—like a mother; that th(
words I never heard; that the
of a few farm people from mil(
at me; that the grasshopper
foot, an' in the air, an' even
but above all else I recall,
the other people like somebod
world, the tall, straight form
of neighbor King. It was 1
who managed everything, fr(
his hand fell upon my should(
until the last limb was knit
fence around the lonely grave
have happened to me withou(

I 'm only a woman,—one of
I s'pose,—for I broke down en
after poor Micah was buried.
said I went crazy: that I 'd kn
side of the bed an' cry as if
break; that again an' agai
front door an' looked up an'
treeless road, an' then to
where I would call "Micah
I 'd been used to callin' hin

I 'd listen, with my hand to my ear, to hear him answer. Last of all, worst of all, she said, I went staggerin' across the street, an', pushin' through the rough fence, threw myself upon the grave, an' begged of the great Father to give me back the dead that had been so much to me when he was living. I don't wonder at my losing my head. Micah an' I were both so young, an' we had loved each other so much, as common folks often do, that to lose him was robbin' my life of all its brightness an' sweetness.

The mornin' after the funeral neighbor King was round bright an' early, findin' me red-eyed an' weakly.

"Well, well, Mrs. Pyncheon," he began, in what was for him a cheery voice, "what are we a-goin' to do now besides summin' up a little? Are we goin' to our relations?"

"No, Mr. King," I answered, havin' thought over the matter a little; "no; I 'm goin' to stay here. I have no relation I want to bother. Here 's the place for me an' Hannah. The farm is paid for, an' all I have is *here an'*

— an' over t
spot where M
'll let me, I
"Quite rig
of course, wh
can't work th
sible. I 've
thought, an' i
let me. Sup
You name my
that my men
you. The hop
year; but wha
I 'll get my sh
year's crops. I
you must not
men has a sis
healthy, willin
She 'll be glad
superintend aff
an' make the be
keep you in goo
must n't mind n
can get a know

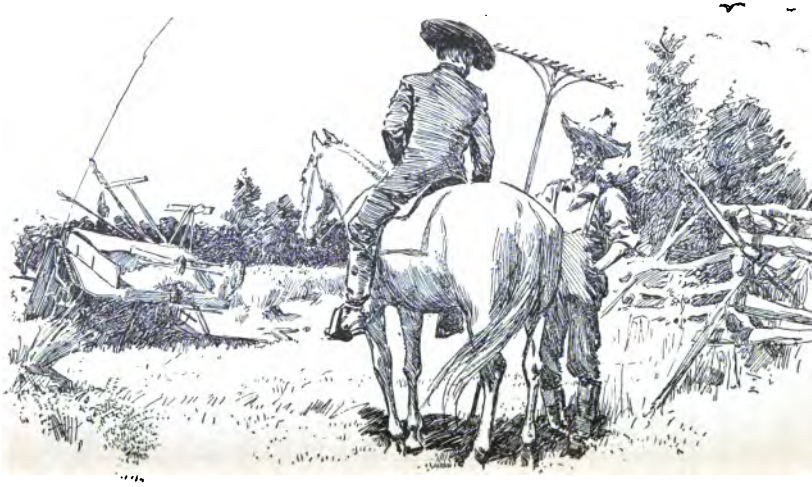
thank me; I 'd rather you would n't. Just keep cheerful, an' as long as we 've got to live, let 's make the best of life."

This was very good from neighbor King—somethin' you would n't expect from such a sad or solemn-lookin' man—a man so quiet, so reserved, appearin' always as if he had some grief of his own, so that he could sympathize with others in misery. He must have been forty years old, for his dark-brown hair was showin' gray around the temples, an' there were deep wrinkles around the corners of his mouth, an' lots of little ones around his deep-sunken brown eyes. It always seemed to me as if he 'd been constructed for a minister or a lawyer, an' stopped half-way as a farmer. He was no half-acre farmer, but a worker of hundreds of acres, an' my little homestead was only a potato-patch alongside of his. The queerest thing about his place was that there was n't a woman on it. All the work, cookin' an' everything, was done by men. Well, girls was scarce in those days an' those parts, an' perhaps that was the reason. Maybe, again,

he was afraid
bossin' around
did n't care.
only knew he
affliction—the
selfish friend a
an' every night
bor King, askin'
goodness an' kin

True enough,
leave me much
keep soul and bo
The pesky things
to leaves. I b'li
green out of the s
it. Why, the earth
gone over it with
missin' a spot here
green after the critt
was only one thing
was themselves—m

Neighbor King (his
I found out afterw
matters pretty closel
tended to my interes



cause, as he said, I was a v
suffer. There was hardly
ride over the little farm t
were goin', always stoppir
have a cheerful talk, or t
comin' from the village, a
news of the big world so fa
he left a newspaper, that
self what was a-goin' on. T
thing, in his grave, soothi
down my sorrow—not to l
for that was impossible—a
way of my life as pleasant
hedged in with sweet-sm
alive with birds nestlin' an
the buds and blossoms. I
ful, peaceful way neighb
three years, to build his li
thinkin' matters over, I re
necessary to make that
did n't forget poor Mica
At the same time I felt t
on alone the balance of m
ger in my heart for some
love me. An' he? Well,

line had been spoken; but I read the change in his eyes, his looks, his manners, in the tones of his voice. Women read where there's neither print nor writin'. I could n't tell why he should love me, though as women go I was young,—fifteen years younger than he, —an' fair-lookin', an' a worker. I was compassionable an' in sympathy with him. Put yourself in my place, an' be the lonesome, forlorn creature I was, an' see if you would n't love the man who put aside the dark clouds an' gave you sunshine to drown despair, an' a cheerful voice instead of silence. Neither of us spoke. It was n't necessary. We understood. An' because of that to me the skies were brighter, an' the earth more beautiful, the days fuller of nature's music, an' there was hope an' quiet joy everywhere.

Ah me! I did n't know it, but behind this sunny life, back of this bit of heaven that came down all around me, was a big black cloud full of storm. I remember well the evenin' it first began to show itself. I saw neighbor King comin' down the road from the village on his pony. He did n't

stop, as was his habit, but cantered his head down and reins loose. Then, as if he had forgotten somethin', he wheeled the horse sharp around, trotted back, threw the bridle over a fence-post, an' came in. I saw somethin' was the matter from the absent-minded way he talked an' by his lookin' mostly at the floor.

Strange, too, he began about crops an' prices. Then he had somethin' to say about the village, and from that to livin' in big cities, an' how such places changes people's natures, makin' women different creatures — more bold, more forgetful of friends, less kindly to their sex than those of the country. An' he said it all as slowly an' softly an' solemnly as those ministers pray who don't think the Lord 's deaf. He seemed to be tryin' to get at somethin' by goin' round it, an' I thought that somethin' was me.

"Neighbor King," I said finally, "you always speak so kindly of women folks that it seems odd to me that you never have a woman on your farm, an' odder still that you 've never married."

"Mrs. Pyncheon,"—his face lightin' like the sky just before sunrise,—"you a are old an' tried friends, an' I know you respect an' keep secret what I 'm going tell you, an' what, to be plain, I came to you. I knew, an' I did n't wonder, that thought it strange I 'd never married. Lord only knows how I hunger for a woma love, a woman's talk, a woman's prese where I can see her. I would give all I worth if I could take a good woman by hand as my wife, an' go forth even to be life over again. Hunger an' thirst are rible, but they are easily borne in compar with the hunger an' thirst for a woman's that I have endured for years. No one realize my lonesomeness, Mrs. Pynch an' reachin' out, he caught my hands in "I've been your friend for years. You it. I believe you 've been mine. Will continue such when I keep from you a I dare not tell, an' give you, in its pla fact that you must know? I know you brave an' strong. You 'll be so no secret, too—for no one here knows wha

goin' to tell you. Mrs. Pyncheon, I am a married man."

I could n't help it, but the news was so sudden an' so startlin' that my hands drew away from his with a wrench, an' I drew away, feelin' hurt an' shamed, if not guilty; an' I felt a flush of anger burnin' my cheeks.

"There! there! don't misjudge me, Mrs. Pyncheon. Pity me instead. I 've made no attempt to deceive you. I 've been silent, because I could not talk about a matter that was sad an' sacred. Yes, I 'm married; but"—an' great tears came into his eyes—"my wife has been hopelessly insane for ten years. You buried Micah, and mourned for him, knowin' he was dead. I buried my wife alive. God knows whether I 've grieved for her. She is in an insane asylum. For years I could not break away an' leave her; it seemed so heartless to desert one who had been the joy an' pride of my youth. But the doctor told me that it was death for me if I stayed; that I could not last more than a year goin' on as I 'd been livin'. Now you can understand why I am here, solitary an' hope-

less, without a friend—ur
one?"

"You never had a tru
King,"—my heart speakin
"When I think of what yo
an' how you 've thought o
world was the darkest,—v
my life was too short in w
prayers for you."

Perhaps I spoke parti
spirited, an' perhaps my ey
I spoke; for he looked very u
a minute, his face lightin' u
unused to, an' then he sa
Mrs. Pyncheon; I think I un
not forget this meetin'. G
fore I knew what he meant
an' kissed my forehead, an
house before I could speak

I was n't angry; I was
truth was given, I was deli
was hungry an' thirsty for
was woman enough to kno
meant. At the same time
poor man, chained, so to

person, bearin' his unseen burden so uncomplainingly, an' doin' godlike work all the year round. But the more I thought over that kiss, the more I realized that between neighbor King an' myself had been suddenly put up a high wall, he on one side, I on the other; an' that in the future I should see him very seldom.

It happened as I thought. Days passed an' neighbor King came not. The thumpety-thump of his pony no longer sounded along the road. Mornin's and evenin's came an' went, an' not a "howdy do" in his pleasant voice. I was n't surprised; I expected as much for a time. Finally, one of the hired men said he 'd gone away. Then I put my lips together in a dogged way, an' settled down to a lonesome life, cheered a little by the prattle of little Hannah, an' kept from rustin' by the farm work. I was lonesome, very lonesome, when the evenin' shadows crept over the ground, an' the crickets began to sing, the katydids to scold, an' the hoot-owl to give his mournful cry over in the grove where Micah lay.

ere was daybreak at last, though nearly
nth after neighbor King had gone. One
s men brought me a letter.—the first
ad for years,—an' I looked it a long
before I opened it, wondering what
ge news it had for me to know, why I
l have it, an' what I should do with it
had come. I knew the writing; it was
oor King's. Was it good news or news
ivel my heart up as with fire? I tore
end an' pulled out the sheet. It did n't
ong to read it.

"CHICAGO, August 17, 1897.

RS. PYNCHEON: I find that my wife has
ead a year.

"HORACE KING."

letter dropped from my hand. It was
artbreaking end of a love-story the
up of one of those little tragedies
the world seldom hears about. ch
ories are happening all the le
poor people, an' so are too common n
way-up world; yet they are full of
hes, an' hot, droppin' tears, an' gr

sobs that are like m
bor King had come t
had found the idol o
put away in her gr
hopin' was at an end.
must have suffered
years, nobody but hin
that he was free, po
farm an' go back to t
whom he had been s
soon be forgotten.
thought! It almost
knew how much I lo
ing left alone, to gr
withered, an' no wor
me up along the pat
myself. I knew he
plow his talents into
light of his intellect
fields of wheat or co
me feel, somehow, th
denly changed—that
the same as it had be
The tears came into
sure but I was sobbin

some feelin' when I heard a step behind me, an' before I could put away the letter or wipe my eyes, a hand was softly laid upon my shoulder. I sprang to my feet, too frightened to speak. Instantly there was an arm around my neck an' a kiss upon my cheek, an' I heard neighbor King say, with a happy laugh, "It 's only me, Miranda. I find I 'm here as soon as my letter."

"I thought you might not be comin' back," I whispered with quiverin' lips.

"Why, my darling, I 've come back for you," he said, bendin' over an' kissin' me again. "Did n't you understand me when I was here last?"

"I thought I did, but was n't sure. The kiss was a sort of mystery. But it 's all plain now, an' I 'm so happy;" an' like a little fool, was off to cryin' again, this time for gladness, an' he a-holdin' me close in his arms.

This may not read like much of a love-story, yet it was a bitter story for me, all in all, during the years from Micah's death to the golden mornin' that brought such sweet

relief an' rest. The thought troubles me now an' then, but I don't believe that Micah, if he sees from the other world what I've done, blames me for the change. He knows I can't forget him, an' would not if I could.

Through months an' years of loneliness, of heartaches, of hopin' an' expectin', of dragin' along for no particular purpose save to keep body an' soul together, with few joys an' but little else than sighin', an' the greyness world made no more for me than a little farm, a little house, an' a voiceless sky above me—what blame, then, have I, if I brightened an' happified my life an' his my making neighbor King my husband?

A FELINE F

BY

ANNA ROBESON

13

A FELINE FATE

BECAUSE the night was bitterly cold, sleet was falling in thin, sharp li Dick Eaton put on his heavy overcoat which everything was fur-lined, even to pockets, before starting for Mrs. Leight dinner.

He was not feeling particularly happy, though he was in general a happy-hear fellow enough. When one is twenty-eig and has just received a severe snub fr one's lady-love, one does not contemplat long, dreary dinner with much satisfacti Dick certainly did not. He would mu rather have stayed at home and nursed woes over a bright fire, a volume of Dum

and a pipe. However, as this was not to be, he did not grumble, but only gave a sigh, or two at the fate which allotted that his art should have flown away before as aware of it, and without any prospect of its acceptance.

It cannot be denied that it was Dick's fault. He had chosen to fall in love with a very superior person—with a girl of wit as well as beauty; with a young lady who had seen and traveled much, who barely tolerated the average young man, and who, as she counted among her friends many prominent people, could afford to pick and choose. It was not to be expected that Lilian Girton, an honored guest in Upper Bohemia, privileged to act as a hostess to scores of well-known people, should have any time to waste on Dick Eaton. It was nothing to her that he persistently and furtively adored her, that he had done so from the first week of their meeting two years ago, and less than nothing that he was possessed of a considerable income. The Girton money made this latter fact of no consequence; and Dick himself—well, Dick

was not clever. He
nor act; he was not
socialistic. He was
der-hearted fellow, p
temper, from whose a
tations of modern lif
a duck's back. He l
action nor told a slan
generous of heart, la
weakness for animals.
perate, but not rigi
played poker—a litt
making a bet. He v
and pure-minded an
that some of his fri
"Sir Galahad"—behin
Dick would not have kn
Indeed, it is to be dou
heard of Sir Galahad. I
ments were rather slim,
He read Shakspere and I
eray and Dumas, and h
Collins. He had no tas
thought theosophy was
did not know a thing a

never heard of Mr. George Meredith, from which it may be inferred that in Miss Girton's eyes he was a highly commonplace and objectionable young man. Nevertheless, in despite of snubs, sarcasm, and ill-concealed indifference, Dick adored Miss Girton loved her with a single-souled passion which colored all his life and dominated all his thoughts; which made him her knight, whether she would or no.

It is not quite certain whether Miss Girton was aware of this fact; certainly all of Dick's friends were, and they were for the most part very sympathetic, and sang his praises all day long, much to her astonishment.

"I cannot understand," she said, "what it is that makes that young Eaton fellow so popular. He has n't an ounce of brains; but, to hear his friends talk, one would think he had the mental powers of a Bismarck."

This state of affairs did not tend to make her any kindlier to him. She was always out when he called, or else some celebrity came in, and Dick was left enshrouded in outer darkness during the brilliancy of their con-

versation. So it hap
ticular evening he wa
for once, discouraged.

It was cold and w
sleet was fine, with
and it clung to door-l
dow-panes until there
dryness anywhere. T
blew the sleet into l
streets were uncomfor
ments and mushy at cro
along, with the collar o
about his ears, feeling tl
had conspired together
and growing less incli
formality of a dinner a
the distance, perhaps, h
and the last bad crossi
successfully, when he fe
against his foot and stick
trousers. At the same t
piteous mew. The night
and the sleet dimmed the
corner; so Dick stopped,
trousers-leg until his gl

in contact with a ball of shivering wet fur, which offered no resistance when he raised it.

It was a kitten,—a very weak, very wet, and very miserable kitten,—from the drenched hair on its little gray head to the tip of its shivering tail, the incarnation of helpless misery. It lay passively, sprawled over his hands, and looking at him with blinking green eyes, far too cold and uncomfortable to be frightened.

"Hello, old man," said Dick, staring at it, at the draggled, helpless paws and the thin rough coat. "Where do you belong?"

The kitten naturally made no answer, but continued to blink at Dick and to shiver helplessly. It was so very small that it staggered and slid about when it tried to stand; so it finally gave up trying, and subsided into an indeterminate heap.

"Well, I 'm awfully sorry, but I can't help it, you know," Dick said, half apologetically. "Run home to your mama. You 're far too little to be out alone."

He set it down on the pavement again; but

it only crouched there, mewing, and whe
moved away sprang feebly up his leg,
clung there till he could bear it no lon
He was fond of cats, and this one was so
tiny and abject and wretched, he could
abandon it. He lifted it again, and rub
the rough fur for dryness, and then tick
it gently under the ch n and behind the e
while the kitten sat on his arm, and held
head first to one side and then to the oth
as if it enjoyed the process. Then it bac
down into the palm of his hand, and th
curled up, sticking its head into the fur
of his sleeve. There was evidently no
trying to get rid of it, and, after all, I
could not abandon the little creature w
had fled so confidently to him for protec
"Well, you are cool," he said, strokin
soft little head; "but I say, old man, wh
I to do with you, you know?"

The kitten offered no solution o
problem beyond an attempt to purr—
weak, hoarse purr, to be sure, but an a
ment of which it was evidently not
proud. The purr settled it. Dick w

hearted, and half conquered already. As he looked about him in despair, he caught sight of the red light swinging in front of Briggs's grocery store at the corner, and he remembered that Briggs kept a bull-dog who liked kittens to play with, and who usually mangled one a week. Meanwhile it was growing late, and Dick was freezing, two circumstances which added weight to the situation. There was nothing to be done for it but to take the kitten along. Abandon it he would not; find it shelter he could not; the only course left was to take it with him. Once at the Leightons', he could decide what to do with his troublesome charge; meanwhile—

"Well," said Dick, resignedly, striding on, "I suppose you have got to come; only, old man, I must say I wish you had chosen to favor me on my way home."

And the kitten gave a jubilant burst of purr which sounded apologetic.

Dick transferred it to his pocket, which, as it was a very small kitten indeed, was very roomy quarters. The kitten smelled all over

it carefully first, and then tied itself into a tight bunch and proceeded to make its toilet; while Dick walked briskly on, chuckling to himself sometimes at the oddity of his position, and yet reflecting on his situation with some anxiety.

As he drew near the house he grew more and more perplexed. He simply could not produce the beast upon entering Mrs. Leighton's parlors; the effect would be too ridiculous, and Dick was foolish enough to be sensitive to ridicule. Miss Girton was to be there, and he dreaded her laughter; he felt sure that such a proceeding would ruin him forever in her eyes. An able-bodied young man picking up a forlorn alley cat and bringing it with him to a dinner-party—it was quite impossible. And yet, what was to be done? If the animal would stay quietly in his pocket, it might not be so hard to conceal it during the meal, and he would excuse himself as early as possible. The kitten seemed so abject and meek that he felt inclined to try the experiment, trusting to the novelty and warmth for due effect in keeping

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it still; yet, at the same time, he could not but acknowledge to himself that there were more risks than one. However, it really seemed the only course to take, and Dick resolved to trust to luck, which had rarely failed him in an emergency.

"Now, old man," he said to the kitten, as they stood on the door-steps, "I have done you a good turn, you know, so I expect you to do me another by lying low and keeping dark. Don't give yourself away, old man, if you love me."

"I 'll put my coat here," he said, hastily, as the butler offered to disencumber him of that garment. He could hear the hum of voices in the drawing-room, and her bright laugh rippled out above the maze of conversations. If he had entertained any idea of producing his prize, it vanished now. He hung his coat carefully in a dark corner, away from the stony-eyed butler and his assistants, and tried to arrange the folds so as to hide the small gray head which peeped inquisitively out over the edge of his pocket.

Meanwhile he petted
conjured it not to be
The kitten appeare
evidently sleepy, and l
it had already preparec
breathed a fervent pra
pat, and strode nervou
room.

Never was dinner so
They had allotted him t
girl in her first season, a
from Miss Girton's end o
lady sat between the pian
writer of short stories, and
dull jealousy that she see
terms with both. As for hi
his concealed crime rose u
every mouthful. The girl w
thought him very queer and
for he talked by fits and sta
now and then she caught
anxiously toward the door.

With the third course came
—how to feed his incubus. T
was starving Dick made do d

ought was sufficient to spoil his dinner for
m. He felt exceedingly guilty at the
ought that he had not provided for it
efore. Also, the thought that the smell of
od might possibly attract the animal from
is pocket, and induce it to make its appear-
ce in the dining-room, filled him with
prehension. He looked about him for
mething to slip into his pocket and con-
y to it secretly, but the outlook was not
omising. To say nothing of the difficulty
transportation; such viands as sweetbreads
la Marengo, chicken with truffles, or Roman
nch were hardly the diet any self-respect-
g cat would select for her offspring, and
ck knew it. He passed three courses in
deavoring to manufacture some plausible
cuse for leaving the table, but finally gave
in despair, resolving to wait until the
lies retired to the drawing-room, when
greater freedom that prevailed might
his purpose.

When cigars had been lighted and chairs
shed back, and when conversation was
ving gently and intermittently, like the

"'MILK! SAID THE HOST, FORGETTING TO RELIGHT HIS CIGAR."

nto the glasses, Dick felt his hour had

eighton," he said, addressing his host elaborate indifference, "would you— I—ah, that is—would it be too much ole to get me a glass of milk?"

n amazed silence fell upon the party at singular request, and even old Grubbs ped short in the middle of his longest and st wearisome story.

"Milk!" said the host, forgetting to re- at his cigar, and staring at our hero in plexity.

"Punch," suggested the short-story writer.

"No," said Dick, shaking his head; "just plain glass of milk, please."

"Certainly, if you want it," said Leighton; but won't champagne do?"

"Well, you see, the fact is," said Dick, vrithing on his chair, "the doctor ordered me after every meal—"

"Oh, of course, if you like," said his host; and the butler brought a large tumbler of milk, and placed it solemnly before Dick on the table, during a rather chilly silence.

Then they all began tal
else, and only the short
opposite, kept looking a
and then. There was
forced to gulp down a
which he did with a v
Meanwhile, how to ge
"Leighton," he sa
straighten a candle-sh
say that Gladstone ha
'Times' for that last
"Yes," said Leight
"and of all the unwa
The Radical membe
other end of the table
on the subject, and
wanted to ask quest
that the men pushed
center of the table, sq
generally made ready
minutes, as Dick had
too deep in politics to o
He felt quite proud of
was no time for self
half-finished glass of

nd wandered over to the window;
e buffet for a light; then, quite un-
out of the door and down the hall
his overcoat hung.

en was awake and seemed restless.
hat he was just in time. He held
ne arm, and carefully tilted the
t until every drop was gone.

old man," he said, as the little
ed its head caressingly against his
ou feel better, don't you? Have a
your drink?" It amused him to
easure-trove like an acquaintance.

of chairs being pushed about in
-room struck him with sudden
spilled the kitten hastily into
again, sped back with the empty
ut it on the table with the air of
has done his whole duty.

!" said the short-story writer,
uddenly around, and surveying
usly, "you 're a healthy speci-
l your medical regimen on that
ask?"

d Dick, with superb simplicity;

"only a man must look after h
know, and I 'm not in condition
"You look it," said the short
sarcastically. "I saw you at th
day, boxing, and the amount of
displayed there alarmed me;
Milk, indeed! Nervous prost
cated with heart-disease, is al
I fancy."

"I hope it 's not as bad as a
Dick, with the calmness of in
would have done credit to Mr
"but there 's no knowing wh
out if I 'm not careful."

The short-story writer ga
look as they passed out of t
together, and then went ov
the French tenor, who had b
lected during the political c

Conversation in the drawi
exciting, and Dick grew ner
the tenor sang, and the pi
the short-story writer told
ous things which had fall
other people's experience;

Girton, and found this rather
nat lady, however, was in her
as when she was not discuss-
the critic, she was analyzing
with the pianist or exchang-
mpliments with the tenor, he
le chance to put in his oar.
nis duty, but he eyed her from
avy heart. He drifted aim-
nging to get away, and yet
irresistible pleasure it gave
ook at her.

room was heated by a large
t soon became unpleasantly
people wandered out by twos
into the music-room, a few
tly lighted hall. Miss Gir-
hese, and Dick, as a matter
the group of men gathered
nazarded a remark now
gave him a chance. Now
, he thought, as she stood
aceful, in her fawn-colored
with her bright eyes and
movements of head and

hands. The ribbon of her bouquet h
come untied, and she rolled it in her s
and trailed it to and fro over the
wood floor as she talked.

"It is n't so much the humanity of
she was saying; "it 's his perception
higher being, I think, which gives se
much power over things purely ideal.
Dick wondered, with a sickening
of ignorance, what was "a perceptio-
higher being." Suddenly a thrill o-
hension seized him. There was a sti
the overcoats in a dark corner of
and as he gazed anxiously in that c
two bright spots met his eyes—tv
of topaz fire fixed intently on the fl
that fascinating blue ribbon! Hov
and trailed about! What kitten
most staid, could have resisted
tation?

Dick saw the danger at once.
sudden plunge and picked it up
"Your ribbon is untied," he s
it to Miss Girton with nervous
"Thank you," she said in sc

it dangle from her hand for a m
n shook it out in a long curve
dark wood. It was too much
kitten could withstand that.
e was a bound and a rush, and
r of four soft little paws, and
mate waif lay on its back under
s very feet, kicking and clawing at
in an ecstasy of playful excitement.
od gracious!" exclaimed Miss Girton,
ng back. "Where did that come
"

's a cat, by Jove!" said somebody.
Dick, feeling cold and weak all over,
a step forward.
's mine; I picked it up," he said dis-
y. "It was so cold and wet, you
—"

did you find it?" "Was it here all the
?" "Where did it come from?" cried
body, crowding around; while the kitten
short charges at the ribbon, batted at
th its paws, and kicked at it frantically
its hind legs.
ck told the whole story with a sinking

line
No
the
ck's
Miss
the
nt.

heart. What would she think of him? would she say? She did not say any but nearly everybody else did. The told a long story about his cat in Leips the short-story writer clapped Dick shoulders. "Come, Eaton, now confe cried, laughing. "I spotted somethin the first. That milk — ?"

"Yes," said Dick, scarlet, but stur was for the kitten."

There was a roar of laughter fro men, and then the joke had to be ex to the ladies, and Dick had to tell agai he had managed it.

"And why you did not produce the right away," said Leighton, "I canno derstand exactly. By the way," he a "there 's a smart fox-terrier of min stairs. Let 's introduce them and some fun."

Dick made a dash for his protégé, — by this time had gotten the ribbon mixed with its own tail and was trying to swal both, — and caught it up.

"No, you don't," he said, holding the fur

little head against his chin caressin
"This little beast 's had quite enoug
that sort of thing, I fancy. I 'm goi
take it home and make it comfortable
don't mind living with me, old man?"
o the kitten. "We 'll be pretty good
o long as you don't smoke bad tobacco
He got on his overcoat, and said goo
his hostess amid a fire of good-nat
aff. Then he looked round for Miss Girton.
e was standing alone by the fireplace,
isting the fatal ribbon absently in her
gers, and her face wore a curious expres-
n. Dick, with his prize still cuddled up
his arms, came over to her.

All that for a kitten?" she said, some-
t irrelevantly. "Why was it?"

Oh, well, it liked me," said Dick, simply,
it was so beastly wet, you know."

gave him her hand with a sudden
ing smile.

Don't you come and see me to-morrow?"
aid. "I shall be quite alone all the
oon, and I do so want to hear about
the kitten."

THE WHIP-HAND

BY

ANN DEVOORE

THE WHIP-HAND

SHE was a stunning girl, straight and slim, with a bewildering way of looking at a man. Her eyes were a warm, thick brown, and their lids as white as cream—the deluding sort of eyes and eyelids that say nothing, and set you to imagining everything. When I had talked to her for five minutes and she had regarded me with her soft stare for most of that time, my heart went to thumping at my ribs. I must confess I was so much surprised that I clapped my hand to my side and laughed out.

Miss Morris laughed too, and asked "What is the matter?"

Of course I could not tell her then; b

I had known her for a month, I asked she remembered our first meeting.

'es," she said; "what made you start?"

ook her hand and said, "I fell in love you that minute, dear."

am a Westerner, and rough and sudden ıy ways, I suppose; for she seemed wholly rtled, slipped her hand out of mine, and d me never to speak so again.

"Why not?" I asked. "You do not love e, Kitty?"

"No," she said; but her eyes lingered in ıine.

"And you will not marry me?"

She refused steadily.

"And I am never again to tell you that I love you?"

"Never," she said.

"Kitty, dear," said I, gently, "you do love me, and you are going to marry me, and I mean to propose to you every time I meet you."

I went then, for she was rather angry. She said something cutting about my Western ways, and shooting a man on sight. But

I kept my word, an
wherever we met, i
always made my sp
me, dear?" After a
sight of me across
spring to her cheek
was half embarrass
other half was plea
nate way of tilting h
approach that was v
only the more deter
not absolutely cut
done. She would n
and if I asked for a
gaged; but when I s
dance, Miss Morris,"
dict me.

Late one afternoo
Lent, when I had n
days, I overtook h
church, and joined
frigidly, held her pr
head high. I watch
cheeks.

Miss Morris," I sa

Ahead of us, where the church spires pierced the cold northern sky, a small star glittered. The faces of the people we met reflected the ight of the sunset behind us. I began gain. "When you pray," said I, and I oked at her prayer-book, "do you never k to be made more merciful?"

She turned her soft eyes to me. "Please t, Mr. Standish," she pleaded. "I can-bear to have you use words that seem to acred to carry on this farce."

t is anything but a farce," said I. "Call ragedy."

id any man in earnest ever propose to eleven times in six weeks?" She his question scornfully.

s Morris," said I, "it is not my fault as been done so often. If you had me at the first—but you refused what else could I do? Am I a fool in and again to win what is the best beautiful thing I ever set eyes on? I stop asking you to marry me consent? You must marry me,

dear. I am sure it is t
happiness for either of us.
"There," she said, with
"twelve times! Don't you
that by acting so you mak
say seem a foolish joke?"
"It is you," I told her,
them all a glad reality."
"Oh!" she cried, "and y
my fault! Well, it shall nev
—never, never! You shal
yourself and me." Her colo
she drew herself up, slen
"Mr. Standish," she said, '
that if ever again I give you
of speaking so to me, I shall a
you wish."
We reached her home
stopped. So great was my
merely bowed, and let her a
in silence.
Life went sadly after t
would, I could not speak to
passed in the street she w

e had taken to looking on one side of th a sweet, dark-eyed vacancy. There few entertainments now; and though I nted her favorite church at the afternoon vices, she did not come. She seemed to oid going to the houses of those friends here she would be likely to meet me. Only nce was I able to look at her for more than passing second. I had taken a ticket for n afternoon concert in the hope of seeing er, and I chanced to sit where I could atch her profile whenever she turned to peak to her companion. She looked a trifle ale and sad. "Perhaps," thought I, "she egrets that her efforts are so successful." hat thought, however, was knocked out of e, when we reached the street, by the smiling nrecognition which greeted my eager bow.

Six weeks came and went, but never an pportunity to make her fulfil her promise; nd then she went to Boston for a visit, and tayed away a month. I grew haggard. eople told me I must take a run abroad in he summer. "Not till I 'm married," said and gritted my teeth. I believe that at

this time my love for Kitty
forgotten in my set deter
my own way.

There came a May mo
balmy. The horse-chestnu
green fans, the maples
palms to the breeze, an
trim flower-beds looked
walking through Madiso
to business, and hope
heart. I suppose it wa
of nature that had tak
not feel much surprise
and I saw Kitty
what the weather had
took joyfully to my
Eastward we went t
street and down Sec
this quiet, old-fa
he hansom stopped
ion. Kitty had alig
the interior darkn
and though I kn
within, I remain

ab.

and she had taken to looking on one side of me with a sweet, dark-eyed vacancy. There were few entertainments now; and though I haunted her favorite church at the afternoon services, she did not come. She seemed to avoid going to the houses of those friends where she would be likely to meet me. Only once was I able to look at her for more than a passing second. I had taken a ticket for an afternoon concert in the hope of seeing her, and I chanced to sit where I could watch her profile whenever she turned to speak to her companion. She looked a trifle pale and sad. "Perhaps," thought I, "she regrets that her efforts are so successful." That thought, however, was knocked out of me, when we reached the street, by the smiling unrecognition which greeted my every bow.

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sion. Kitty had al
by the interior dar
her; and though I
lived within, I ren
som-cab.

Then an idea entered my mind—an idea for which the mad May season was alone accountable. When Miss Morris reëntered the hansom-cab, it was I who received the order to drive home; it was I who cracked the long whip and drove recklessly; it was I who feasted my sight on the top of a broad-brimmed hat, a loop of dark hair, and the tip of a small and haughty nose. I had the trap-door in the top of the cab open all the way.

Trusting in the disguise of the former cabby's hat, which I had hired, I made straight for the park; and when we were rolling smoothly between green lawns, with no one of any account in sight, I bent low and whispered:

"Kitty, dear, will you marry me?"

She started violently, and upturned a white face. I don't know what she thought, seeing my face above her there; but her eyes filled slowly with tears, and she whispered, "Dick!"

"Kitty," I said, "don't cry, or I shall come down from the roof, and here is Mrs. Van Dam's brougham. I would not have fright-

ened you for anything in
slowed the horse to a walk, s
give my whole attention to th

"I have come to claim you
called down to her. "Tell me,
you are glad to see me."

Her pride seemed to be meltin
eyes. Her tears overflowed, and s
hands up before her face; but
quavering voice: "I am glad, Di
glad!"

I dropped the reins, and pressed
the little door. "Darling Kitty, if
you 'll break my heart," I called.
brave girl. Oh, Kitty, could n't you
your hand up and let me touch it on

"I—I can't reach," she sobbed.

"Then you do love me?" I asked.

She wiped her eyes. "Dick,"
"could n't you come down?"

I believe the horse was arrested that
noon for walking on the grass and
young trees; but it pleases me to thin
while Kitty and I wandered throu
sweet paths and blossoming alleys, th

beast was tasting green food and resting his tired bones.

There in the early solitude, in the genial sunshine and the unsteady shadows, Kitty confessed to me that she had gone to Boston for fear of weakening in her resolution to avoid me.

"Oh, Dick," she said, "I thought you would never come and take me in spite of myself."

"Kitty," said I, "would you have wrecked our whole lives from pride and self-will? Would you have let me lose you?"

She turned away her head, and blushed. "Dick," she faltered, "this afternoon you will receive an invitation to dine with my aunt; and I—I am to be there Dick."